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THE BIT O' WRITIN'

AND OTHER TALES.

VOL. III.

MR. BULWER'S ATHENS.

Now Ready, in Two Volumes, Octavo.

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THE

BIT O' WRITIN'

AND

OTHER TALES.

BY

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.
1838.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY IBOTSON AND PALMER,
SAVOY STREET.

CONTENTS

OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

	Page
THE CHURCH-YARD WATCH . . .	1
THE LAST OF THE STORM . . .	27
THE RIVAL DREAMERS	69
THE SUBSTITUTE	109
THE "WHITE BRISTOL" . . .	151
THE STOLEN SHEEP	195
THE PUBLICAN'S DREAM . . .	225
THE ACE OF CLUBS	253

THE CHURCH-YARD WATCH.

THE

CHURCH-YARD WATCH.

The dead are watched lest the living should prey on them!—'Tis a strange alliance—of the living with Death—that His kingdom and sovereignty may remain untrenched upon. In different parts of England, we have seen watch-houses, almost entirely composed of glass, built in lonesome church-yards, of which generally the parish sexton, and perhaps his dog (ill-fated among men and dogs!) are the appointed nightly tenants; with liberty, ceded or taken, to leave their dull lamp in the watch-box, and roam, here and there, at their pleasure, among

the graves, until day light. What stern necessities man forces upon man! There can scarce be a more comfortless lot, or, making allowance for the almost in-born shudderings of the human heart, a more appalling one, than that of the poor grave scooper or bell-puller who is thus doomed to spend his night, summer and winter. Habit, indeed, may eventually blunt the first keenness of his aversion, if not terror: he may serve a due apprenticeship to horrors, and learn his trade. After a thousand secret and unowned struggles to seem brave and indifferent, he may at last grow callously courageous. His flesh may cease to creep as he strides on, in his accustomed round, over the abodes of the silent and mouldering, and hears his own dull footstep echoed through the frequent dreary hollowness beneath. But what has he gained, now, beyond the facility of earning his wretched crust for himself and his crying infants!—We have seen and spoken with such an unhappy being, who seemed to have lost, in the struggle which conquered nature's especial antipathy, (nature in a breast and mind like his, at least,) most of the other

sympathies of his kind He had a heavy, ox-like expression of face; he would scarce speak to his neighbours (although *we* contrived to make him eloquent) when they passed him at his door, or in the village street; his own children feared or disliked him, and did not smile nor whisper in his presence. We have watched him into the church-yard, at his usual hour, after night-fall; and as he began to stalk about there, the ghastly sentinel of the dead, he appeared to be in closer fellowship with them, than with the fair existence which he scarce more than nominally shared. It was said, indeed, that, upon his initiation, at a tender age and under peculiar circumstances, into his profession of church-yard watchman, temporary delirium prepared him for its regular and steady pursuit ever since; and that, although he showed no symptoms of distinct insanity, when we knew him, the early visitation had left a gloom on his mind, and a thick, nerveless insensibility in his heart, which then, at forty-five, formed his character. In fact, we learned a good deal about him, for every one

talked of him—and, as has been hinted, much of that good deal from himself, to say nothing of his wife, in his absence; and if he did not deliberately invent fables of his past trials, for the purpose of gratifying a little spirit of mockery of our undisguised interest, as mad as the maddest bedlamite he must have been upon the occasion alluded to: nay, to recount, with a grave face (as he did) the particulars of the delusions of his time of delirium, did not argue him a very sound-minded man at the moment he gave us his confidence. We are about to tell his story, at length, in our own way, however; that is, we shall try to model into our own language (particularly the raving parts) what his neighbours, his spouse, and his own slow-moving and heavy lips have, from time to time, supplied us with.

He was the only child of an affectionate and gentle-mannered father, who died when he was little more than a boy, leaving him sickly and pining. His mother wept a month, mourned three months more,—and was no longer a widow. Her second husband proved a surly fellow,

who married her little fortune, rather than herself, as the means of keeping his quart pot filled, almost from morning to night, at the village Tap, where he played good-fellow and politician to the expressed admiration of all his companions. He had long been the parish sexton, and took up his post, night after night, in the church-yard. Little fear had he of what he might see there; or, he had out-grown his fears; or, if he thought or felt of the matter, the lonely debauch which he was known to make in that strange banquet-place, served to drug him into obliviousness. He deemed his duty—or he said and swore he did—only a tiresome and slavish one, and hated it just as he hated daily labour. And—as he declared and harangued at the Tap—he had long ago forsworn it, only that it paid him well; but, now that his marriage made his circumstances easier, he was determined to drink alone in the church-yard no longer: and he fed an idle, useless lad at home, who with his dog—as idle as he—roamed and loitered about, here and there, and had never yet done a single thing to earn their

bread. But it was full time that both were taught the blessings of industry; and he would teach them;—and—now that he thought of it—why should not Will take his place in the watchbox, and so keep the shillings in the family? His friends praised his views, one and all, and he grew thrice resolved.

Returned the next morning from his nocturnal charge, he reeled to bed in solemn, drunken determination. He arose, towards evening, only half reclaimed by sleep to ordinary sense, and set about his work of reformation. He ate his meal in silence, turned from the table to the fire without a word, looked at the blaze, grimly contemplative, then grumbling suddenly at his wife—"And where is that truant now?" he asked: "down by the marshes with his cur, I suppose; or gone a-nutting, or lying stretched in the sun, the two idlers together; what!—and must I work and work, and strive and strive—I, I, for ever—and will he never lend me a hand?—go where he likes, do what he likes, and laugh and fatten on my labour?"

"Master Hunks," said the wife, "Will is sickly, and won't fatten on either your labour or mine—not to talk of his own;—you know 'tis a puny lad, and wants some favour yet a-while; with God's help, and ours, he may be stronger soon."

Will and his dog here came in. From what followed, this evening, it will be seen, that the ill-fated lad promised, in early youth, to be of an open, kindly, intelligent character, very different indeed from that in which we found him husked up, at five-and-forty.

He saluted his step-father, and sat down quietly near the fire. His poor dumb companion—friend of his boyhood, and his father's gift—coiled himself up before the blaze, and prepared to surrender his senses to happy sleep, interspersed with dreams of all the sports he had enjoyed with his master that day. Hunks, his eye glancing from one object of dislike to the other, kicked the harmless brute, who jumped up, yelping in pain and bitter lamentation, and ran for shelter under Will's chair. Will's pale cheek broke out into colour, his

weak eye sparkled, his feeble voice arose shrilly, and he asked—"Why is my poor dog beaten?"

"The lazy cur!" said Hunks—"he was in my way, and only got paid for idleness."

"'Twas ill done," resumed Will—"he was my father's dog, and my father gave him to me; and if my father were alive and well, he would not hurt him, nor see him hurt!"—Tears interrupted his sudden fit of spirit.

"Cur, as much as he is!" retorted Hunks—"do you put upon me, here at my own fireside? *You* are the idler—you—and he only learns of you—and I hadn't ought to have served him out, and you so near me."

"It has been God's will," said the boy, "to keep my strength from me."

"Be silent and hear me!" roared Hunks—"this is your life, I say—playing truant for ever—and what is mine, and your own good mother's here?"

"Master Hunks," pleaded the wife—"God knows I don't grudge nothing I can do for my poor Will's sake."

"And you—not a word from you either,

Missis!" grunted Hunks—"I am put upon by one and t'other of you—ye sleep in comfort every night, and leave me to go a-watching, out o' doors, there, in all weathers; but stop a bit, my man, it shan't be this way much longer; I'll have my natural rest in my bed, some time or other, and soon; and you must earn it for me."

"How, father? how can I earn it?" asked Will—"I would if I could—but how? I hav'n't learnt no trade, and you know as well as any one knows it, I am not able to work in the fields or on the roads, or get my living any one way."

"Then you can sit still and watch—that's light work," muttered Hunks.

"Watch!" cried mother and son together—"watch what? and where? or whom?"

"The dead folk in the church-yard."

"Heaven defend me from it!" cried poor Will, clasping his hands and falling back in his chair.

"Ay, and this very night," continued the despot—"this very night you shall mount guard in my place, and I shall have my lawful

sleep, what the whole parish cries shame on me for not having months ago."

"Master Hunks, 'twill kill the boy!" cried the mother.

"Missis—don't you go for to cross me so often!"—remonstrated her husband, with a fixed look, which, short as they had been one flesh, she had reason to understand and shrink at.—"Come, my man, stir yourself; 'tis time you were at the gate; the church clock has struck; *they will expect us*"—he interrupted himself in a great rage, and with a great oath—"but here I keep talking and the cur never minds a word I say!—Come along!"

"Don't lay hands on him!" screamed the mother as he strode towards the boy—"what I have often told you, has come to pass, Master Hunks—you have killed him!"

Hunks scoffed at the notion, although, indeed, Will's hands had fallen helplessly at his side, and his chin rested on his breast, while his eyes were closed, and his lips apart. But he had only become insensible from sheer

terror acting on a weak frame. Sighs and groans soon gave notice of returning animation. His mother then earnestly besought their tyrant to go on his night's duty, and, at least till the following night, leave her son to her care. Half in fear of having to answer for a murder, incredulously as he pretended to speak, Hunks turned out of the house, growling and threatening.

"Is he gone?" asked Will, when he regained his senses—"gone not to come back?"—and having heard his mother's gentle assurances, he let his head fall on her shoulder, weeping, while he continued:—

"Mother, mother, it would destroy the little life I have! I could not bear it for an hour! The dread I am in of it was born with me! When I was a child of four years, I had dreams of it, and I remember them to this day; they used to come in such crowds round my cradle! As I grew up, you saw and you know my weakness. I could never sit still in the dark, nor even in the daylight out of doors in lonesome places. Now in my youth—a lad—almost a

man—I am ashamed to speak of my inward troubles. Mother, you do not know me—I do not know myself! I walk out sometimes down by the river, and, listening to the noise of the water over the rocks, where it is shallow, and to the rustling of the trees as they nod in the twilight, voices and shrieks come round me—sometimes they break in my ears—and I have turned to see what thing it was that spoke, and thought some grey tree at my side had only just changed and become motionless, and seemed as if, a moment before, it had been something else, and had a tongue, and said the words that frightened me!—Oh, it was but yester evening I ran home from the banks of the river, and felt no heart within me till I had come in here to the fireside, and seen you moving near me!

"You know the lone house all in ruins upon the hill—I fear it, mother, more than my tongue can tell you! I have been taken through it, in my dreams, in terrible company, and here I could describe to you its bleak apartments, one by one—its vaults, pitch dark,

and half-filled with stones and rubbish, and choked up with weeds—its winding, creeping staircases, and its flapping windows—I know them all, though my feet never yet crossed its threshold!—Never, mother—though I have gone near it, to enter it, and see if what I had dreamt of it was true—and I went in the first light of the morning; but when close by the old door-way, the rustle of the shrubs and weeds startled me, and I thought—but sure *that* was fancy—that some one called me in by name—and then I turned and raced down the hill, never looking back till I came to the meadow ground where cows and sheep are always grazing, and heard the dogs barking in the town, and voices of the children at play!"

"Will, my king," said his mother, soothingly, "this is all mere childishness at your years. God is above us and around us; and even if evil and strange things are allowed to be on earth, he will shield us from all harm. Arouse up like a man! for, indeed, your time of boyhood is passing—nay, it has passed with other lads

not much older; only you have been poorly and weakly from your cradle, Will. Come, go to sleep; and before you lie down, pray for better health and strength to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" he repeated—"and did my step-father say anything of to-morrow?"

His mother answered him evasively, and he resumed,—"Oh, how I fear to-morrow!—oh, mother, you have loved me, and you do love me—for my weakness, my ill-health, and my dutifulness—and you loved my father—oh, for his sake as well as mine, mother, keep me from what I am threatened with!—keep me from it, if you would keep me alive another day?"

He went into his little sleeping-apartment, stricken to the very soul with supernatural fears.

After spending a miserable night, he stole out of the house next morning, and wandered about the private walks adjacent to the town, until he thought his step-father might have arisen and taken his usual walk to the Tap. But as the lad was about to re-enter the house,

Hunks met him at the threshold. Will shrunk back; to his surprise and comfort, however, his fears now seemed ill-founded. The man bid him good morrow in as cheerful and kind a tone as he could command, shook his hand, tapped him on the head, and left the house. Delighted, though still agitated, Will sought his mother within doors, told her his good omens, and spent a happy day. At dinner, too, notwithstanding Hunks' presence, the mother and son enjoyed themselves, so amiable had the despot become, at least in appearance.

When their meal was over, Hunks, as if to attain the utmost civility, invited Will to go out with him for a walk by the river—"and let's have Barker (Will's dog) for company," continued Hunks; "he may show us sport with a rat, or such like, Will."

Accordingly, the three strolled out together, Will leading the way by many a well-known sedge or tuft of bushes, or undermined bank, the resorts of the water-rat, and sometimes of the outlaw otter; and Barker upheld his character, by starting, hunting down, and killing

one of the first-mentioned animals. As twilight came on, they turned their faces towards the little town. They entered it. Its little hum of life was now hushed; its streets silent, and almost deserted; its doors and windows barred and bolted, and the sounds of the rushing river and the thumping mill were the only ones which filled the air. The clock pealed ten as they continued their way. Hunks had grown suddenly silent and reserved. They passed the old Gothic church, and now were passing the gate which led into its burial-ground. Hunks stopped short. His grey, bad eye fell on the lad—"Will," he said, "I be thinking we've walked enough for this time."

"Enough, indeed,—and thank you for your company—and good night, father," answered Will, trying to smile, though he began to tremble.

"Good night then, my man—and here be your watch-light"—and Hunks drew a dark lantern from his huge pocket.

"Nay, I want no light home," said Will; "I know the way so well; and 'tis not very

dark; and you know you can't do without it on your post."

"My post!" Hunks laughed villanously—"your post you mean, Will; take it; I be thinking I shall sleep sound to-night without a dead-light—as if I were a corpse to need it. Come along."

"You cannot have the heart to ask me!" cried Will, stepping back.

"Pho, my man"—Hunks clutched him by the shoulder with one hand, with the other unlocked the gate and flung it open—"In with you; you'll like it so in a few nights, you'll wish no better post; the dead chaps be civil enough; only treat them well, and let them walk awhile, and they make very good company." He dragged Will closer to the gate.

"Have mercy!" shrieked the wretched lad, trying to kneel, "or kill me first, father, to make me company for them, if that will please you."

"Get in!" roared the savage—"get in!—ay, hollo out, and twist about, so, and I'll pitch yonr shivering carcass half way across the

church-yard!"—he forced him in from the gate —stop a bit, now—there be your lantern"—he set it down on a tomb-stone—"so, good night —yonder's your box—just another word—don't you be caught strolling too near the murderer's corner, over there, or you may trip and fall among the things that turn and twine on the ground, like roots of trees, to guard him."

With a new and piercing shriek, Will clung close to his fell tormentor. Hunks, partially carrying into effect a threat he had uttered, tore the lad's hands away, tossed him to some distance, strode out at the gate, locked it, and Will was alone with horror.

At first an anguish of fear kept him stupified and stationary. He had fallen on a freshly-piled grave, to which mechanically his fingers clung and his face joined, in avoidance of the scene around. But he soon recollected what clay it was he clung to, and at the thought, he started up, and, hushed as the sleepers around him, made some observations. High walls quite surrounded the churchyard, as if to part him from the habitable world. His lamp was

burning upon the tombstone where Hunks had placed it—one dim red spot amid the thick darkness. The church clock now tolled eleven. It ceased; his ears ached in the resumed silence, and he listened and stared about him for what he feared. Whispers seemed to arise near him; he ran for his lamp, snatched it up, and instinctively hurried to the watch-box. Oh, he wished it made of solid rock!—it was chiefly framed of glass, useless as the common air to his terrors! He shut his eyes, and pressed his palms upon them—vain subterfuge! The fevered spirit within him brought before his mind's vision worse things than the church-yard could yawn up, were all that superstition has fancied of it true. He looked out from his watch-box in refuge from himself.

That evening a half-moon had risen early, and, at this moment, was sinking in gathering clouds behind distant hills. As he vaguely noticed the circumstance, he felt more and more desolate. Simultaneously with the disappearance of the planet, the near clock began again to strike—he knew what hour! Each stroke smote his

ear as if it would crack the nerve; at the last sound, he shrieked out delirious! He had a pause from agony, then a struggle for departing reason, and then he was at rest.

At day-break his step-father found him asleep. He led him home. Will sat down to breakfast, smiling, but did not speak a word. Often, during the day, his now brilliant eye turned to the west; but why, his mother could not tell; until, as the evening made up her couch of clouds there, drawing around her the twilight for drapery, he left the house with an unusually vigorous step, and stood at the gate of the churchyard. Again he took up his post. Again the hour of twelve pealed from the old church, but now he did not fear it. When it had fully sounded, he clapped his hands, laughed and shouted.

The imaginary whispers he had heard the previous night—small, cautious whispers—came round him again; first, from a distance, then, nearer and nearer. At last he shaped them into words—"Let us walk," they said—"though he watches us, he fears us." *He!*—'twas

strange to hear the dim dead speak to a living man, of himself! the maniac laughed again at the fancy, and replied to them:—

"Ay, come! appear! I give leave for it. Ye are about in crowds, I know, not yet daring to take up your old bodies till I please; but up with them!—Graves, split on, and yield me my subjects! for am I not king of the church-yard? Obey me! ay, now your mouths gape—and what a yawning!—are ye musical, too?—a jubilee of groans! out with it, in the name of Death!—blast it about like giants carousing!

"Well blown!—and now a thousand heads popped up at once—their eyes fixed on mine, as if to ask my further leave for a resurrection; and they know I am good-humoured now, and grow upward, accordingly, like a grove of bare trees that have no sap in them. And now they move; passing along in rows, like trees, too, that glide by one on a bank, while one sails merrily down the river—and all is stark staring still: and others stand bolt upright against their own headstones to contemplate. I wonder

what they think of! Move! move! young, old, boys, men, pale girls, and palsied grandmothers—my church-yard can never hold 'em! And yet how they pass each other from corner to corner! I think they make way through one another's bodies, as they do in the grave. They'll dance anon. Minuets, at least. Why they begin already!—and what partners!—a tall, genteel young officer takes out our village witch-of-the-wield—she that died at Christmas—and our last rector smirks to a girl of fifteen—ha, ha! yon tattered little fellow is a radical, making a leg to the old duchess!—music! music!—Go, some of you that look on there, and toll the dead bell! Well done! they tie the murderer to the bell-rope by the neck, (though he was hanged before,) and the bell swings out merrily! but what face is here?"

It was the vision of a child's face, which he believed he caught staring at him through the glass of his watch-box—the face of an only brother who had died young. The wretch's laughter changed into tears and low wailings. By the time that his mother came to seek him,

just at day-break, he was, however, again laughing; but in such a state as to frighten mirth from her heart and lips till the day she died. As has been said, symptoms of positive insanity did not long continue to appear in his words or actions; yet, when he recovered, there was still a change in him—a dark and disagreeable change, under the inveterate confirmation of which, the curious student of human nature may, at this moment, observe him in his native village.

THE LAST OF THE STORM.

THE LAST OF THE STORM.

At a very early hour of a July morning, an admirer of the picturesque stood alone upon the top of a hill, on a spot best calculated to give him a bird's-eye view of the town in which he was a temporary resident, together with its adjacent scenery. The prospect he commanded was indeed most pleasing, notwithstanding that some blotches occasionally offended the eye, and produced disagreeable associations in the mind.

The extensive "haunt of men," containing twenty thousand souls, peeped out, here and

there, about a mile distant, through groves, gardens, and orchards, mixed up with its outskirts, and through more rural foliage between him and them. The river that ran under its bridges from a remote hill-source, widened as it approached the stranger; uplands sloped from behind it, and all around to a great distance the country was spotted with villas and mansions, and relieved with masses of trees, rich and abundant for an Irish landscape, though somewhat meagre if compared with a parallel scene in perfected England. Beyond them, from twenty to forty miles off, towered blue mountains—shapeless, excepting in the general outline; blank, pale; the mere spectres of what, in reality, they were. Upon their peaks alone the rising sun had begun to shine, whilst all the rest of the picture remained untouched by his beams, though visible in their promise;—not vague in twilight, but distinct and fresh, however cool, and, as it were, unjoyous in the reflection rather than in the presence of godlike day. A white mist curled up at different points of the wide-spread slopes, the

river running gray and dim, and showing only black wrinkles where at noon-tide it was to sport its dimples, and interweave its maze of little lines of light.

The dark spots of this fair view remain now to be noticed. Part of the suburbs of the town consisted of dingy ruins: cabins, and small farm-houses beyond them, also appeared half-burned; —no cattle grazed or sauntered, or reclined in their trampled pasturages—few, indeed, could be seen over the whole landscape; in other fields, hay had rotted, and wheat and barley were going to decay for want of the sickle; many mills upon the brink of the river, or of its tributary streamlets, showed signs of recent and present idleness; and before one of them, which the stranger knew had lately been converted into a temporary barrack, a sentinel was pacing. These and other things indicated that civil war, not yet quite subdued, had recently visited, in its bitter wrath, one of the fairest districts of his country: in fact, it was the end of July, 1798.

"But the storm is about to pass away," said

he, " never again, I hope, to gather on our hills and desolate our plains ;—a few weeks more, and in this town and county, at least, we shall be amenable to our own civil magistrates, and not to the arbitrary administrators of martial law ;—a few days more, and our sisters, wives, and daughters, need not tremble through the livelong night, cowering together like wood-pigeons from the hawk ;—a few days more, and you, dearest Bessie, now dreaming of me (you will say so at breakfast) in yonder garrisoned town, may be permitted to accept of my protection."

Indulging the last feeling, he employed himself, lover-like, in trying to make out, among the different groups of houses that broke through the foliage in and beyond the town, the identical roof under which he imagined his fair dreamer to slumber, when he heard shrill cries from a bye-road that skirted the hill upon which he stood, although its convex sweep was so abrupt as to hide that road from his view. Suddenly the cries were hushed—and then came a clashing of weapons, from the same

quarter. Indifferent to the danger of interfering, in such times, in an unknown quarrel, he hastened to the road, not indeed by plunging directly downward from the spot on which he had been standing, which was impracticable, but rather by running along the hill's ridge towards the town until he gained a path which, winding obliquely over its bosom, would tardily usher him upon the road, at a point considerably above the spot he was so anxious to gain.

Before he got half way down, the clashing ceased, as the cries had previously done. He stopped to listen in the *bosheen*;—horsemen approached him, yet hidden by a turn of the road. Prudence now qualified his first chivalrous ardour, and he secreted himself behind a fence. Presently, two Hessians, belonging to a regiment quartered in the town, came slowly up to his hiding-place. They were conversing in their own language, with which he was acquainted, and their first words strongly interested him. They came close—he held his breath to catch every syllable they uttered, and just as they passed, he ventured, for a reason

drawn from their discourse, to glance observantly though cautiously at them. He became satisfied, so far;—the face of one bled profusely; the right arm of the other was bound up, and hung disabled at his side. Soon after clearing his ambush, the Hessians trotted briskly towards the town. He then jumped over the fence, and, greatly excited, ran along the road in the direction they had come. He arrived at a stile, leading into a pasture-field, which belonged, as he was aware, to a farm-house, distant some fields more from it, and skirting a little retired hamlet—almost the only one in the immediate district still free from the visitations of civil war. The mark of horses' hoofs on the dust near the fence, recently impressed, made him pause at this spot. He vaulted over the stile, and remarked, even during his quick transit, that it was bloody. At the end of a path running from it, he saw two cows standing together, holding down their heads; a pail, overturned, was near them; and beyond them were some men and women, with eyes bent upon the ground. A few bounds

brought him into the midst of the group, and he now saw what he had expected—the poor owner of the pail lying senseless, if not dead, on the grass; her head bruised, and a severe wound in her neck.

He called on the bystanders for an explanation—one and all, they professed complete ignorance of the accident. They had only heard screams at some distance; and when, after waiting for each other to advance in a body, they arrived on the spot, they saw no one—nothing, in short, but the poor girl lying there, her pail upset, her milk spilled, and the two cows standing over her; and "*she* could not yet spake for herself, if it was the Lord's will that she was ever to spake agin at all;" but one of the women surmised that "Brown Beck, the young cow wi' the sharp horns, that now and then was a giddy, cross-grained cow, might have done the mischief, for as sorry as she now looked on the head of it."

The catechist did not regret the ignorance of the peasants, and with praiseworthy caution, resolved not to make them wiser on the subject.

He only assisted in conveying the wounded milk-maid to the farm-house, having first despatched a messenger for a surgeon. The girl moaned when they stirred her, but gave no sign of consciousness. Her new friend saw her laid on a bed, and taking the dame of the house aside, soon convinced the good woman's understanding that, till the arrival of a surgeon, she alone ought to sit by the sufferer's couch, and hear her explanation; if, indeed, she should be able to give one by that time. The next instant he was on the road to the town.

In the suburbs he met the surgeon proceeding to visit his patient. It was most advisable to make a confidant of this gentleman, also; accordingly, our young acquaintance stopped him, repeated much of what he had said to the farmer's wife, obtained the assurances he wished, and walked quietly forward.

It did not surprise him to observe, at the entrance of the town, groups of people looking around, as they conversed in a low tone, and turned their heads and eyes in the direction which the two bleeding Hessians must so very

recently have taken. But, he was startled — though expecting something of the kind, too — when, as he gained the main street, drums beat to arms, trumpets sounded to the field, and soldiers of every description, regulars, militia, and the local yeomen, hurried, obeying the summons, to a well-known place of rendezvous.

He was received at the friend's house in which, for many months, he had been a visitor, with a welcome that suggested that his family had expected his return, in some alarm. His host, and his host's son, stood at the back of the servant who opened the door, and shook his hand warmly. A voice yet gentler than theirs, whispered his name through a half-open door in the hall, and he disappeared into the apartment to answer the summons as became him; nor did he lead Bessie Gordon to the breakfast-parlour until he had made her the exclusive confidante of his morning's adventure, detailing every circumstance very minutely, for her satisfaction and assurance.

Breakfast was nearly over, when he asked— "And now, my good friends, what is the mean-

ing of the excitement in which I find you all?"

"No one has told you, as you came along, Harry?" said Mr. Gordon.

"No!"

"Then you have yet to hear disagreeable news. Two of the Hessians of our garrison, on their way to General Sir A. D. with despatches, this morning, have been attacked by a body of rebels, who, unfortunately for me, seem to be composed of my tenantry about Killane."

"Ay!" cried Harry, drily.

"Ay, indeed, and the two poor fellows are badly hurt; and Sir A. D. is going to march out almost the whole garrison, to burn every cabin of the hamlet, if he cannot meet with the treacherous rascals."

"Ay!" repeated Harry, his brow knitting and his cheek reddening, to the surprise of his host; "and have *the two poor fellows* described the appearance of the rebels, sir? Were there any *women* among them?"

"Why, yes, as is almost always the case:

one of whom, the men think, they have wounded."

"Ay!" still cried Harry, rising sternly, while a party of horse trotted up to the hall door, and then a loud knocking resounded through the house.

"The General," resumed Mr. Gordon—"following up his intimation to me, even sooner than I expected."

"What intimation, sir?"

"That, before he proceeded to Killane, he would require my opinion as to those of my tenantry there, most likely, from symptoms of previous disaffection, to have headed the insurrection this morning.

"Mr. Gordon," resumed Henry, while they heard the General and his party ushered into an adjoining room, "there is now no time to inform you why I am very anxious to stand by your side during this interview, but I particularly request you to afford me that privilege."

"Henry Lane," answered his host, "your

expression, when you came home just now—the preference I know you have for that morning walk towards Killane—your manner at breakfast—your present request—all convince me you can say something about the matter in question—is it so?"

"It is, Mr. Gordon."

"And you *do not fear* to stand by my side?"

His young guest scouted the notion.

"Although your old enemy, Kirk, is at the General's elbow?"

"Although the devil, instead of a dear friend of his, were there, Mr. Gordon."

They entered the General's presence together. He was a sharp-featured man; having a military air certainly—but one of an inferior kind. A scar through his lips, and down his chin, argued, indeed, effective service; but it also added to the ungentle expression of his countenance, and did not combat the presumption that fitness of natural character, rather than high achievement in the field, had recom-

mended him to his late and present situation of despotic chief, judge, and all but hangman, at a terrible and merciless crisis.

At his right hand stood Mr. Sheriff Kirk—also Captain Kirk; the second title having been conferred by a command in one of the yeomanry corps of the town. He wore, of course, his military uniform, and did not lack the air of a soldier. Nor were his cool grey eyes, his yellow cheeks, and his steady mouth, evidences of a merely civil energy of official character. A few words more, glancing at his previous history, are required, for the knowledge we need to have of this individual.

Ten years before, he had kept a very humble shop in the town. A large reward was offered for the apprehension of a notorious robber. Mr. Kirk courageously issued into the country —returned with the highwayman—got the reward—and never afterwards knew a poor day. Under the patronage of the noble person who dispensed corporate honours, he rose rapidly in the world. At the breaking out of the Rebellion, no man could be more active in dis-

covering hidden traitors, and dragging them to justice; some said, indeed, that on the principle of "sure hide, sure find," he might be supposed to be peculiarly adapted for the service. In the field, as a yeomanry officer, his zeal was equally conspicuous; for instance, after a skirmish with a band of United Irish, in a village some miles distant, two of the retreating peasants ran for shelter into a thatched chapel on the road-side, and Mr. Kirk pursued them, sword in hand, and dispatched the superstitious rebels on the steps of their little altar.

Henry Lane, when his host presented him to Sir A. D., wondered at the coldness of the General's bow. The undisguised sneer of Mr. Kirk did not surprise him. Upon his arrival, as the visitor of his father's oldest friend, Bessie Gordon was from home, and, amid the mixed society of the town, a daughter of the Captain-sheriff received at his hands more passing gallantry than perhaps fell to the lot of the young ladies around her; but Bessie came—looked—and conquered; and, in consequence, Mr. Kirk and his "darling child" chose to con-

sider themselves ill-used people. But we dare say the gentleman felt even more keenly a second injury. Henry Lane had snatched from his gripe an innocent man, from whose condemnation as a rebel, Mr. Kirk had expected to reap peculiar advantages.

Mr. Gordon preferred his own and his young friend's request that Harry might be permitted to remain during the interview about to commence. The General and Mr. Kirk exchanged very expressive glances: and while, to Henry's increased amazement, the former said—"Certainly; though we could not suppose the young gentleman would be so anxious about it,"—the latter, almost to his consternation, smiled.

"In fact, sir," resumed Sir A. D., "our principal business here is—making as little noise as possible—to desire you to consider yourself a prisoner."

"On what account?" asked Henry.

"Why, sir, we hope you may be able to tell us something of the insurrection of this morn-

ing;—you were observed on the road to Killane, hiding behind a fence, when, as is presumed, you found yourself likely to be overtaken by the retreating Hessians."

Henry Lane now asked another, and a very impolitic question; one that seemed almost to imply guilt; instead of at once communicating the information it was his duty to submit. But his curiosity to ascertain who had observed him, when he felt convinced the Hessians had not, threw him off his guard.

"Observed! by whom?"—he demanded.

"I regret to say, by me, Mr. Lane," continued Captain Kirk; "I happened to be in the fields, at your back."

"Then you dogged me, like the spy and informer you are, sir," said the accused, giving way to youthful passion. He was severely checked by the General, and advised to speak more to the point. Much grieved and alarmed, his old host whispered him to be cool and collected: this, as is sometimes the case with persons in his situation, only made him less tract-

able. He vociferated;—he gesticulated;—he unbuttoned his coat, violently;—and there was an exclamation from the General and his prime-minister, as both pointed to a large bloody stain on his waistcoat. Henry had received it while assisting the unfortunate young woman to the farm-house; had buttoned his coat over it, as he returned to the town; had almost forgotten it, since; and had now unconsciously disclosed it. Feeling aware how much it must tell against him, he became silent and confused, and, to the scrutinizing eyes which observed him, appeared really guilty.

"Pray, Mr. Lane," continued Sir A. D., "inform us, at last, if you please, why you concealed yourself from the Hessians, and in what manner your waistcoat became soiled."

Courageously rallying, Henry said frankly what he had to say. The General and Mr. Kirk again glanced at each other; and the former, shaking his head, expressed his regret that, in the very improbable story submitted—and so tardily submitted—he saw little that

ought to keep the matter from the ordinary test of a court-martial.

"Very well, sir," said Henry, "only send for the poor girl, and if she is able to attend"—(and his blood grew chill at the thought that she might be dead, without having uttered a word!) "I can laugh with scorn at the result."

The General believed that, whether she could attend or not, Mr. Lane would hardly be benefited; it was already in evidence from the two Hessians, that they had wounded one—and only one—of the motley rabble; that one, a woman, and, necessarily, the witness appealed to; and any convenient story she might tell, was scarcely worth the trouble of sending for; particularly as a dispatch to Killane must put the rebels on their guard against the intended attack; "and," continued Sir A. D., "as we only await the closing of the present case to march for their position."

Well aware of the prompt manner in which the General had hitherto deemed himself compelled to "close" such "cases" as "the pre-

sent," Henry again began to exclaim against his mode of proceeding: "What! is an innocent man to be destroyed by the very villains he seeks to bring to justice?"

Mr. Gordon, quite terrified, raised his voice in entreaties for time and cool investigation. A whisper from the Captain-sheriff disposed of his appeal; and that gentleman then stepped out, and returned with two dragoons, who placed themselves at either side of the prisoner.

"In the name of common sense!" still conjured Henry, "how can I be supposed capable of the absurdity laid to my charge? My father's loyalty—as well known as are his rank and high character—my friends here—the first in your town—free from all taint,—how can suspicion fall on me? *I* a rebel! *I* join with rebels in the fields!"

"Mr. Lane may recollect that his late zeal on behalf of a known and marked rebel, might not have left *motives* quite unsuspected," said Mr. Kirk.

"Silence, paltry fellow!" cried the accused;

"and now, Sir A. D., I have but one remaining appeal to make from your court-martial—from even your order for a court-martial—from yourself, personally—and it is to the distinguished man who has been publicly appointed to succeed you in your command over us all; understand, therefore, distinctly, that I protest, in his name, against your authority, and demand to be left—a prisoner, if necessary—for his disposal."

"You will understand, in return, sir, that although the gallant individual to whom you allude has, indeed, been nominated to relieve me of my painful responsibilities, I retain, even with his assent, the full powers they confer, until he personally requires a transfer of them at my hands," answered Sir A. D.

"But accountable to him, surely, for the use of what can be but delegated power, since his appointment," urged Mr. Gordon.

"You mistake, sir," said the General.

"He is expected this very day," resumed Henry.

"He *was*; but he is not, Mr. Lane. Two

men of our garrison—of whom you know something—brought me a despatch from him a few hours ago, stating that, from a great anxiety to cultivate anew an old friendship, he will stop and sleep at Lord N——'s, on the road to us. And so I have answered all your demands at length, and, out of respect to your host, perhaps without considering the situation in which I am placed. Now, please to attend us to the court-house."

"Come, then!" cried the prisoner; "and how could I have hoped better from a man, whose cruelty, and not whose honourable services, procured him his present butchering commission; and who dare not stand an appeal to the dignified commander, at length selected to rescue us from his despotism of blood?"—

"My old friend's son!" exclaimed Mr. Gordon, extending his arms, as Henry was led out after the General and Mr. Kirk. A shriek reached them; and ere he could embrace the father, the daughter was clinging to his neck.

"Fear nothing, Bessie—I am innocent."

"I know you are," answered the poor girl;

"but is that a reason why I should fear nothing? Is that a reason why I should forget the sights we have unwillingly seen through the side panes of the old bow-window above stairs? Oh! Harry, remember the horrible day, when, in less than an hour after he was dragged from our table, we beheld poor young S—— led to their rooted gibbet, opposite their court-house! But *you* must be saved!—how—how—what is to be done?"

"I will go out to General K——," stammered Mr. Gordon, who, since Bessie's appearance, had stood with his back against the wall; and while he spoke, he fell. His daughter, screaming again, flung herself down by his side. The dragoons gained the hall with their prisoner;—she flew to him;—they forced her back; and a second time she was at her father's side, now as insensible as he; and Henry, accompanied by her brother, proceeded to the Court-house.

Lord N——'s mansion, at which General K—— was spending the day, was about twelve miles distant from the town. An hour and a

half after the occurrences related, he stood with his old friends before the steps of their hall-door, his hands behind his back, his grey head bent towards his breast. The urbanity of a gentleman, and the light of a good heart, cast a dignity over his massive and hard-marked features. A female, followed by a servant, galloped up the avenue, seated on a spirited little steed, as was evident from the animal's fiery though graceful motions. She wore a lady's riding-habit, but her head was bare—her hat had fallen from her unheeded on the road; and when she swept nearer, her golden hair appeared flowing down her shoulder and around her face, young and fair as the morning; but like morning when its hues are washed out by tears. She must have caught a view of the persons she wished to see, at some distance, for she waved her light whip before they could hear her voice; and when the words she had long been uttering grew at last distinct, she pronounced his name.—He stepped forward.

"For life and death, General K——! for life and death!" she continued; "and not a

moment—and not a word to spare;—order your horses, sir!—you are deputed to act for heaven, this day—you alone!—Come, sir, come!"

Amazed, admiring, sympathising, and much excited, he prayed an explanation.

"Not if you mean *to act!* not if you *will* discharge your great duty! not if you shrink from murder done in your name!—your horses, sir!"

Overpowered by her contagious vehemence, he gave the order required.

"The carriage!" said Lady N——, whose pale cheeks and streaming eyes bespoke the excitement in which she also observed and listened—the carriage was in waiting, to take the party a ride through the grounds.

"Thanks," said the General; "and it is better, if this young lady must"—

"Must and will go back with you!" interrupted Bessie Gordon, jumping from her saddle; and, almost stumbling, she was at the carriage door before he could offer his arm. The next moment they were whirled off, attended by

the aides-de-camp, who had been ready mounted to accompany him on a very different excursion.

In broken sentences, Bessie now gave an explanation of her hasty summons. Henry's confidential communication to her, before breakfast, enabled her to detail the whole of his case. Her companion listened most attentively. He inquired her lover's name. Bessie at last burst into tears as she gave it.

"Why, I know him," said General K——; "at least, I know his father; and may have seen him, when a child, at his father's table: he must be saved, even if he were guilty;—but we shall see."

"The time, sir! the time!" sobbed Bessie; "and we go so slow!"—The horses were proceeding at full gallop.

The General spoke out of the window to an aide-de-camp, desiring him to push forward at the utmost speed of his charger, and announce his approach to the court-martial; and the young man, stimulated by his interest for the beautiful and wretched Bessie Gordon, as well

as by zeal in the service of his beloved commander, soon seemed to substantiate Bessie's charge against the very best gallop the carriage horses could assume. They lost sight of him in a few minutes.

"Is it over?" was her question, addressed to the first stranger she saw, as, an hour afterwards, the carriage rattled into the town; and twenty times she repeated it, although, either that it was not understood or heard, or that the people feared to answer her, no one replied. Approaching the court-house, she leaned out of the window, to look at the hideous gibbet;—its rope wavered in the breeze;—no more.

"Look! sir," she said, catching the general's arm, as she sank into her seat; "what do you think—*are* we too late?"

The carriage stopped;—the door was instantly opened, and an officer of the garrison appeared at it, saluting the General.

"My aide-de-camp, sir?" asked the new commander, getting down.

"I have the honour to await you here with

a verbal despatch from him," replied the officer.

"Where is he, sir?" asked Bessie, jumping to her old protector's side, who repeated her question.

"He has gone forward to Killane, sir, fresh mounted."

"Then the court-martial *have* decided?" continued Bessie.

"They have, madam."

"And Mr. Lane?"

"Has been marched out with the troops, to undergo his sentence, upon the spot where"—

The officer ceased speaking, as Bessie dropped at his feet. He and the General raised her, and she was placed in her brother's arms, who came running down the street.

"Fresh horses for us also, sir," said General K——, addressing the officer, as he pointed to his remaining aides-de camp. While his commands were being obeyed, he walked up and down an open space before the court-house, his hands joined at his back, and his head bent as was customary with him. Other officers of

the residue of the garrison left in town, and several of the persons who, before the proclamation of martial law, had wielded civil authority, approached to pay their respects. Suddenly he stopped, and glancing up at the gallows, said to the group generally, "take that down: its day is over." Then he resumed his short walk, and again stopping, and scowling at the triangle which appeared in a corner of the space, added, "and down with that, too; *its* day had passed even before it was put up."

His horses were led out, and he and his aides-de-camp proceeded towards Killane, by the narrow hill-road upon which Henry Lane had seen the Hessians in the morning; the officer of the garrison riding in advance to show them the way. On approaching the hamlet, they met the second officer, who had gone forward before them, standing over the sorry steed with which he had been supplied at the town: the animal had fallen under him. After a few words they passed him.

"Shall we come up with them, sir?" asked General K—— of the officer.

"I should hope so, sir, unless they have marched at almost double-quick time; yet, see there, sir! and hear that!"—a wreath of smoke burst up into the sunshine, beyond a quick turn of the road, and a cheer, simultaneously reached the party;—"that must be the first firing of the enemy's cabins, and the execution of Mr. Lane's sentence must have preceded it."

General K—— spurred forward, passing his guide, so as to be the first at the turn of the road; and here he said, "you are wrong, sir,—the troops are still in motion towards their point."

It was so. Sir A. D., with his force, had not yet gained the thatched hamlet of Killane; and the smoke that had been observed, arose only from a solitary cabin on the road side, which, having been found deserted by the terrified inmates, was fired by Mr. Kirk's zealous yeomen. Now within hearing of the rear-guard of the column, General K—— cried "Halt! halt!" and desired his aide-de-camp to advance, who, obeying his command, repeated the magical word "halt!" and added, in still louder tone, his commander's name. A halt quickly

ensued, and the General galloped forward. Gaining the head of the line, he saw a young man, sitting on a horse led by a dragoon, his arms pinioned. Their eyes met;—the General touched his old-fashioned cocked hat, and smiled. —Henry Lane, who, till that moment, had worn a firm brow and a flushed cheek, turned sickly pale, and would have fallen from his saddle, but for the assistance of his guards.

The veteran joined Sir A. D. and his staff, still more in front. The two Generals exchanged bows, and stood uncovered, as also did their attendant, while the whole line presented arms, and the trumpets and kettle-drums of the horse, and the bands of the infantry, played a salute. Now the little hamlet appeared in view, and from it came a wild and alarmed cry, in answer to the startling though cheery burst of martial music; and presently, groups of men, women, and children, of every age, were seen running before the cabins, in great terror and disorder.

"The enemy, I suppose," said General K——, smiling; "not in arms, though, and

therefore scarcely worth our attention. Let us send out to reconnoitre, however, in hopes that they may deem us entitled to a better reception. Meantime, Sir A. D., I go towards the cabins."

Attended only by an aide-de-camp, he arrived at the farm-house to which the wounded milk-maid had been carried. The surgeon, still in attendance, pronounced her out of danger, and at last able to speak. General K—— heard, at her bedside, the communications she had already made to her mistress and to the surgeon. Of the latter, he inquired whether she could safely be removed to the town, travelling in an open litter, only as fast as the troops should march. The surgeon said she could: and then, giving the necessary orders, he left the farm-house.

In a contiguous field, he summoned back the reconnoitring parties, and learned from their report, that no enemy of any kind appeared in view. After this he rode to the nearest group of peasants, who, with much entreaty, awaited his approach; told the terrified people to go home

and keep quiet; and lastly, returned to the troops on the road, and ordered them to march back the way they had come.

At the entrance to the town he whispered to his aide-de-camp, who trotted briskly forward. Arrived at the public parade, he halted the soldiers and dismissed them to their barracks: he then desired Sir A. D., the officers who generally formed his court-martial, and the prisoner, Henry Lane, to attend him to the court-house. As they proceeded up the steps of the building, Mr. Kirk, and many of his friends, exchanged eloquent glances at the disappearance of the gallows and the triangle.

The aide-de-camp who had gone forward, met his General in the court, and pointed out the two wounded Hessians, one in the dock, the other at a side-bar.

"Have you kept them separate, sir?" he asked.

"Strictly so, sir," answered the aide-de-camp.

"Gentlemen," he resumed, "we require some additional information touching the rebel move-

ment of this morning; and without yet sitting as a court-martial, I wish to examine, in succession, these wounded men. Let one of them be led quite out of hearing. Let the other come on the table."

He was quickly obeyed. The Hessian selected as a first witness, again affirmed that he and his comrade had been surprised by a band of rebels, at Killane, that morning; and, after wounding one only of the assailants—a woman—barely escaped with their lives. General K—— put questions, requiring minute accounts of the details of the affair, and received certain answers which he desired should be carefully written down. He then seemed casually to inquire what conversation had passed between the witness and his comrade upon the route home, after their escape;—the man hesitated. He raised his voice, knit his brow, and desired instantly a report of their whole conversation along the hill road, whatever it was. The Hessian now gave answers, which were also committed to writing.

"Let him withdraw, and bring up the other —still keeping them apart," resumed General K——.

The second Hessian appeared in the evidence-chair. His general statement of the attack corroborated that of the first; but his account of the specific details, already described by his comrade, was a new story altogether. And when asked to recollect and repeat their discourse on the road homewards, he made it consist of topics, which did not remotely resemble, even in matter, those sworn to by his friend.

"Let them come face to face," was the General's next command. Accordingly, they confronted each other; heard read the extraordinary clashings of their separate testimony, and were called on to reconcile them, if they could. The men were silent.

"Has the prisoner, Mr. Lane, any questions to propose to the witnesses?" asked General K——.

Henry said he would prefer to have them

ask questions of one another, at his dictation. This was agreed to; and he proceeded fluently, in their own tongue.—

"The man whose sword-arm is disabled, shall say to his comrade, 'Hans, bad work you have done for me, and I for you, all about a silly girl.'"

The Hessians started at these words—exchanged glances, — then looked consciously around,—and then bent their eyes on the table.

"If he does not speak, shall I give him the answer Hans gave *him ?*" continued Henry.

"Do so, prisoner."

"Listen, then, Hans.—'Ay, Quinton; but blame your own greediness of the girl's smiles, by the side of an old friend.'"

Again the Hessians showed agitation.

"I continue, sir, speaking for Hans and Quinton, alternately."

Still the General assented.

"'Well, Hans, here we ride back to headquarters, without a smile of hers to boast of, between us.'"

" ' Ay; and in a plight we must account for, too, Quinton.' "

" ' Oh! the rebels have surprised us.' "

" ' Der deyvil! good!—but the girl may prate, unless her mouth is stopped.' "

" ' And I think I've stopped it, Hans: or, no matter; she was one of the ambuscade—half wild Irishmen, half wild Irishwomen; —so, let her tell her story;—who will believe it?' "

" And such is the conversation," resumed Henry Lane, speaking for himself, " which I overheard between these two men, upon the hill-road from Killane, early this morning."

In answer to questions from General K——, he ended by describing his proceedings, after the Hessians passed him, down to the moment at which he left the farmhouse.

" Place them at the bar," said the General; " and now we form our court-martial."

The Hessians were formally arraigned, and the contradictions of their own testimony, coupled with Henry Lane's story, were taken as evidence against them.

"I have yet another witness," resumed General K——, glancing at his aide-de-camp. The young officer withdrew, and speedily returned, ushering to the table a litter, borne by soldiers, on which lay the wounded milk-maid. Her cruel assaulters stared in stupid terror upon her reclining form. The surgeon stood beside her, as in feeble and hoarse accents, she deposed to the following facts:

While employed in milking her cows, two troopers, "with beard on their lips," stopped at the side of the pasture-field, looking towards her; it was "just the grey of the morning." Presently, they dismounted, and separately crossed the stile; one walking fast before the other, and both speaking loudly and angrily in "a fur'n speech." She screamed, attempted to run, and fell, from terror. Nearly at the same moment they broke into open quarrel, drew their swords, and cut at each other. She fainted;—on regaining her senses, she saw them standing, exhausted and bleeding. In a frenzy, she called out the names of her friends, and spoke as if many people were speeding to help

her; the troopers looked around; again exchanged words, in a more friendly tone; came close to her; desired her to cease screaming; finally, beat her about the head, and stabbed her in the neck; and further she could tell nothing.

"The prisoner, Lane, has had opportunity to arrange this improbable story with the cunning girl," said Mr. Kirk.

"Impossible," answered the surgeon; "when I reached the poor creature, she was unable to utter a word; and she must have been still more unable to do so before my arrival."

"She does not identify the men," resumed the sheriff.

"The men confess their guilt," said the aide-de-camp, who stood near them.

"Let them die before the sun sets, notwithstanding," said General K——, "and release Mr. Lane."

"Come home, Hal," cried young Gordon, grasping Henry Lane's hand.

"How is Bessie?" asked the liberated prisoner, on their way through the streets.

"In good hopes, since your return with old K——: and her father still able to congratulate you upon your escape from THE LAST OF THE STORM."

THE RIVAL DREAMERS.

THE RIVAL DREAMERS.

Mr. Washington Irving has already given to the public a version of an American legend, which, in a principal feature, bears some likeness to the following transcript of a popular Irish one. It may, however, be interesting to show this very coincidence between the descenddants of a Dutch Transatlantic colony, and the native peasantry of Ireland, in the superstitious annals of both. Our tale, moreover, will be found original in all its circumstances, that alluded to only excepted.

Shamus Dempsy returned a silent, plodding, sorrowful man, though a young one, to his poor home, after seeing laid in the grave his

aged, decrepid father. The last rays of the setting sun were glorious, shooting through the folds of their pavilion of scarlet clouds; the last song of the thrush, chaunted from the bough nearest to his nest, into which, as soon as his vesper thanksgiving should be done, he intended to hop, was gladdening; the abundant, though but half-matured, crops around breathed of hope for the future; but Shamus's bosom was covered with the darkness that inward sunshine alone can illumine. The chord that should respond to song and melody had snapt in it; and for him the softly-undulating fields of light-green wheat, or the silken-surfaced patches of barley, made a promise in vain. He was poor, pennyless, friendless, and yet groaning under responsibilities; worn out by past and present suffering, and without a consoling prospect. His father's corpse had been just buried by a subscription among his neighbours, collected in an old glove, a penny or a half-penny from each, by the most active of the humble community to whom his sad state was a subject of pity; and in the

wretched shed, which he called "home," a young wife lay on a truss of straw, listening to the hungry cries of two little children, and awaiting her hour to become the weeping mother of a third. And the recollection that, but for an act of domestic treachery experienced by his father and himself, both would have been comfortable and respectable in the world, aggravated the bitterness of the feelings in which Shamus contemplated his this evening's lot. He could himself faintly call to mind a time of early childhood, when he lived with his parents in a roomy, slated house, eating, and sleeping, and dressing well, and surrounded by servants and workmen; and he further remembered that a day of great affliction came, upon which strange and rude persons forced their way into the house, and for some cause his infant observation did not reach, father, servants, and workmen, (his mother had just died,) were all turned out upon the road, and doomed to seek the shelter of a mean roof. But his father's discourse, since he gained the years of manhood,

supplied Shamus with an explanation of all these circumstances, as follows.

Old Dempsy had been the youngest son of a large farmer, who divided his lands between two elder children, and destined Shamus's father to the church, sending him abroad for education, and, during its course, supplying him with liberal allowances. Upon the eve of ordination, the young student returned home to visit his friends; was much noticed by neighbouring small gentry of each religion; at the house of one of the opposite persuasion from his, met a sister of the proprietor, who had a fortune in her own right; abandoned his clerical views for her smiles; eloped with her; married her privately; incurred thereby the irremovable hostility of his own family; but, after a short time, was received, along with his wife, by his generous brother-in-law, under whose guidance both became reputably settled in the house to which Shamus's early recollections pointed, and where, till he was about six years old, he passed indeed a happy childhood.

But a little previous to this time his mother's

good brother died unmarried, and was succeeded by another of her brothers, who had unsuccessfully spent half his life as a lawyer in Dublin, and who, inheriting little of his predecessor's amiable character, soon showed himself a foe to her and her husband, professedly on account of her marriage with a Roman Catholic. He did not appear to their visit, shortly after his arrival in their neighbourhood, and he never condescended to return it. The affliction experienced by his sensitive sister, from this conduct, entailed upon her a premature accouchement, in which, giving birth to a lifeless babe, she unexpectedly died. The event was matter of triumph, rather than of sorrow, to her unnatural brother. For, in the first place, totally unguarded against the sudden result, she had died intestate; in the next place, he discovered that her private marriage had been celebrated by a Roman Catholic priest, consequently could not, according to law, hold good; and again, could not give to her nominal husband any right to her property, upon which both had hitherto lived, and which

was now the sole means of existence to Shamus's father.

The lawyer speedily set to work upon his statute points, and with little difficulty succeeded in supplying for Shamus's recollections a day of trouble, already noticed; in fact, his father and he, now without a shilling, took refuge in a distant cabin, where, by the sweat of his parent's brow, as a labourer in the fields, the ill-fated hero of this story was scantily fed and clothed, until maturer years enabled him to relieve the old man's hand of the spade and sickle, and in turn labour for their common wants.

Shamus, becoming a little prosperous in the world, rented a few acres adjacent to his cabin, and—married. The increase of his fields did not quite keep pace with the increase of his cares, in the persons of the new comers, for whose well-being he was bound to provide: and his ray of success in life soon became overclouded, by the calls of the landlord, and the tithe-proctor. In truth, three years after his marriage, he received a notice, which it were

vain to oppose, to quit both his farm and his cabin, and leave his few articles of furniture behind.

At this juncture his father was bedridden, and his wife advanced in her third pregnancy. He put on his hat, walked to the door, fixed his eyes upon the ruins of an old abbey, which stood on the slope of an opposite hill, and formed his plan for present measures. By the next evening he had constructed a wattled shed, covered with rushes and leaves, against a gable in the interior of the ruin. Clearing away the nettles and other rank weeds, enclosed by his new house, he discovered a long slab on which was carved a cross, and letters illegible to his eye, and this he made his hearth-stone. To furnish the abode, he fetched two large stones, as seats for his wife and himself, shook straw in either corner, and laid in a bundle of twigs. Then he went to the cabin that was no longer his, sent on his wife and two children to the abbey, followed with his father on his back, and laid him upon one of the straw couches. Two days afterwards the old man was a corpse, and

from his pauper-funeral we now see Shamus returning, and to such a home does he bend his heavy steps.

If to know that the enemy of his father and mother did not thrive on the spoils of his oppression, could have yielded Shamus any consolation in his lot, he had long ago become aware of circumstances calculated to give this negative comfort. His maternal uncle enjoyed, indeed, his newly acquired property, only a few years after it came into his possession. Partly on account of his cruelty to his relations, partly from a meanness and vulgarity of character, which soon displayed itself in his novel situation, and which, it was believed, had previously kept him in the lowest walks of his profession as a Dublin attorney, he found himself neglected and shunned by the gentry of his neighbourhood. To grow richer than any who thus insulted him, to blazon abroad reports of his wealth, and to watch opportunities of using it to their injury, became the means of revenge adopted by the *parvenu*. His legitimate income not promising a rapid accomplishment of this

plan, he ventured, using precautions that seemingly set suspicion at defiance, to engage in smuggling adventures on a large scale, for which his proximity to the coast afforded the local opportunity. Notwithstanding all his pettifogging cleverness, the ex-attorney was detected, however, in his illegal traffic, and fined to an amount which swept away half his real property. Driven to desperation by the publicity of his failure, as well as by the failure itself, he tried another grand effort to retrieve his fortune; was again surprised by the revenue officers; in a personal struggle with them, at the head of his band, killed one of their body; immediately absconded from Ireland; for the last twenty years had not been authentically heard of; but, it was believed, lived under an assumed name in London, deriving an obscure existence from some mean pursuit, of which the very nature enabled him to gratify propensities to drunkenness and other vices, learned during his first career in life.

All this Shamus knew, though only from report, inasmuch as his uncle had exiled himself

while he was yet a child, and without previously having become known to the eyes of the nephew he had so much injured. But if Shamus occasionally drew a bitter and almost savage gratification from the downfal of his inhuman persecutor, no recurrence to the past could alleviate the misery of his present situation. He passed under one of the capacious open arches of the old abbey, and then entered his squalid shed, reared against its wall, his heart as shattered and as trodden down as the ruins around him. No words of greeting ensued between him and his equally hopeless wife, as she sat on the straw of her bed, rocking to sleep, with feeble and mournful cries, her youngest infant. He silently lighted a fire of withered twigs on his ready-furnished hearth-stone; put to roast among their embers a few potatoes which he had begged during the day; divided them between her and her crying children; and as the moon, risen high in the heavens, warned him that night asserted her full empire over the departed day, Shamus sank down upon the couch from which his father's mortal remains had

lately been borne, supperless himself, and dinnerless too, but not hungry; at least not conscious, or recollecting that he was.

His wife and little ones soon slept soundly, but Shamus lay for hours inacessible to nature's claims for sleep as well as for food. From where he lay he could see, through the open front of his shed, out into the ruins abroad: and after much abstraction in his own thoughts, the silence, the extent, and the peculiar desolation of the scene, almost spiritualized by the magic effect of alternate moonshine and darkness, of objects and of their parts, at last diverted his mind, though not to relieve it. He remembered distinctly, for the first time, where he was; an intruder among the dwellings of the dead; he called to mind, too, that the present was their hour for revealing themselves among the remote loneliness and obscurity of their crumbling and intricate abode: and, as his eye fixed upon a distant stream of cold light, or of blank shadow, either the wavering of some feathery scion from the walls, or the flitting of some night bird over the roofless aisle, made

motion which went and came during the instant of his alarmed start, or else some disembodied sleeper around had challenged and evaded his vision, so rapidly as to baffle even the accompaniment of thought. Shamus would, however, recur, during these entrancing aberrations, to his more real causes for terror; and he knew not, and to this day cannot distinctly tell, whether he waked or slept, when a new circumstance absorbed his attention. The moon struck fully, under his propped roof, upon the carved slab he had appropriated as a hearth-stone, and turning his eye to the spot, he saw the semblance of a man advanced in years, though not very old, standing motionless, and very stedfastly regarding him; the still face of the figure shone like marble in the night-beam, without giving any idea of the solidity of that material; the long and deep shadows thrown by the forehead over the eyes, left those usually expressive features vague and uncertain; upon the head was a close-fitting black cap, the dress was a loose-sleeved, plaited garment of white, descending to the ground, and faced and other-

wise chequered with black, and girded round the loins; exactly the costume which Shamus had often studied in a little framed and glazed print, hung up in the sacristy of the humble chapel recently built in the neighbourhood of the ruin, by a few descendants of the great religious fraternity to whom, in its day of pride, the abbey had belonged. As he returned very inquisitively, though as he avers, not now in alarm, the fixed gaze of his midnight visitor, a voice reached him, and he heard these strange words:

"Shamus Dempsy, go to London Bridge, and you will be a rich man."

"Murther! how, your Reverence?" cried Shamus, jumping up from his straw; but the figure was gone; and stumbling among the black embers on the remarkable place where it had stood, he fell prostrate, experiencing a change of sensation, and of observance of objects around, which might be explained by supposing a transition from a sleeping to a waking state of mind.

The rest of the night he slept little, thinking

of the advice he had received, and of the mysterious personage who gave it. But he resolved to say nothing about his vision, particularly to his wife, lest, in her present state of health, the frightful story might distress her; and as to his own conduct respecting it, he determined to be guided by the future,—in fact, he would wait to see if his counsellor came again. And he did come again, appearing in the same spot at the same hour of the night, and wearing the same dress, though not the same expression of feature: for the shadowy brows now slightly frowned, and a little severity mingled with the former stedfastness of look.

"Shamus Dempsy, why have you not gone to London Bridge, and your wife so near the time when she will want what you are to get by going there? Remember this is my second warning."

"Musha, your Reverence, an' what am I to do on Lunnon Bridge?"

Again he arose to approach the figure; again it eluded him; again a change occurred in the quality of the interest with which he regarded

the admonition of his visitor; and again he passed a day of doubt as to the propriety of undertaking what seemed to him little less than a journey to the world's end, without a penny in his pocket, and upon the eve of his wife's accouchement, merely in obedience to a recommendation which, according to his creed, was not yet sufficiently strongly given, even were it under any circumstances to be adopted. For Shamus had often heard, and firmly believed, that a dream or a vision, instructing one how to procure riches, ought to be experienced three times before it became entitled to attention.

He lay down, however, half hoping that his vision might thus recommend itself to his notice: it did so.

"Shamus Dempsy," said the figure, looking more angry than ever, "you have not yet gone to London Bridge, although I hear your wife crying out to bid you go. And, remember, this is my third warning."

"Why, then, tunther-an-ouns, your Reverence, just stop and tell me——"

Ere he could utter another word the holy

visitant disappeared, in a real passion at Shamus's qualified curse; and, at the same moment, his confused senses recognized the voice of his wife, sending up from her straw pallet the cries that betoken a mother's destined travail. Exchanging a few words with her, he hurried away, professedly to call up, at her cabin window, an old crone who sometimes attended the very poorest women in Nance Dempsy's situation.

"Hurry to her, Noreen, a-cuishla, and do the best it's the will of God to let you do. And tell her from me, Noreen,———" he stopped, drawing in his lip, and clutching his cudgel hard.

"Shamus, what ails you, avich?" asked old Noreen; "what ails you, to make the tears run down in the grey o' the morning?"

"Tell her from me," continued Shamus, "that it's from the bottom o' the heart I'll pray, morning and evening, and fresh and fasting, maybe, to give her a good time of it; and to show her a face on the poor child that's coming, likelier than the two that God sent afore it;

and that I'll be thinking o' pecturin' it to my own mind, though I'll never see it far away."

"Musha, Shamus, what are you speaking of?"

"No matther, Noreen, only God be wid you, and wid her, and wid the weenocks; and tell her what I bid you. And more-be-token, tell her that poor Shamus quits her in her throuble, with more love from the heart out, than he had for her the first day they come together: and i'll come back to her, at any rate, sooner or later, richer or poorer, or as bare as he went—and may be not so bare either.—But God only knows. And so the top o' the morning to you, Noreen, and don't let her want the mouthful o' praties while I'm on my thravels; for this," added Shamus, as he bounded off, to the consternation of old Noreen,—"this is the very morning, and the very minute that, if I mind the dhrame at all at all, I ought to mind it;—ay, without ever turning back to get a look from her, that 'ud kill the heart in my body entirely."

Without much previous knowledge of the road he was to take, Shamus walked and begged his way along the coast to the town where he might hope to embark for England. Here the captain of a merchantman agreed to let him work his passage to Bristol, whence he again walked and begged into London.

Without taking rest or food Shamus proceeded to London Bridge, often put out of his course by wrong directions, and as often by forgetting or misconceiving true ones. It was with old London Bridge that Shamus had to do —(not the old one last pulled down, but its more reverend predecessor,)—which, at that time, was lined at either side by quaintly-fashioned houses, mostly occupied by shop-keepers, so that the space between presented, perhaps, the greatest thoroughfare then known in the Queen of Cities. And at about two o'clock in the afternoon, barefooted, ragged, fevered and agitated, Shamus mingled with the turbid human stream, that roared and chafed over the as restless and as evanescent stream which buffeted the arches of old London Bridge. In a situa-

tion so novel to him, so much more extraordinary in the reality than his anticipation could have fancied, the poor and friendless stranger felt overwhelmed. A sense of forlornness, of insignificance, and of terror, seized upon his faculties. From the stare, or the sneers, or the jostles of the iron-nerved crowd, he shrank with glances of wild timidity, and with a heart as wildly timid as were his looks. For some time he stood or staggered about, unable to collect his thoughts, or to bring to mind what was his business there. But when Shamus became able to refer to the motive of his pauper journey, from his native solitudes into the thick of such a scene, it was no wonder that the zeal of superstition totally subsided amid the astounding truths he witnessed. In fact, the bewildered simpleton now regarded his dream as the merest chimera; and hastily escaping from the thoroughfare, sought out some wretched place of repose suited to his wretched condition, and there cried himself asleep, in self-accusations at the thought of poor Nance at home, and in utter despair of all his future prospects.

At day break the next morning he awoke, a little less agitated, but still with no hope. He was able, however, to resolve upon the best course of conduct now left open to him; and he arranged immediately to retrace his steps to Ireland, as soon as he should have begged sufficient alms to speed him a mile on the road. With this intent he hastily issued forth, preferring to challenge the notice of chance passengers, even at the early hour of dawn, than to venture again, in the middle of the day, amongst the dreaded crowds of the vast city. Very few, indeed, were the passers-by whom Shamus met during his straggling and stealthy walk through the streets, and those of a description little able or willing to afford a halfpenny to his humbled, whining suit, and to his spasmed lip and watery eye. In what direction he went Shamus did not know; but, at last, he found himself entering upon the scene of his yesterday's terror. Now, however, it presented nothing to renew its former impression. The shops at the sides of the bridge were closed, and the occasional stragglers of either sex who came along inspired

Shamus, little as he knew of a great city, with aversion rather than with dread; and, in the quietness and security of his present position, Shamus was both courageous and weak enough again to summon up his dream: "Come," he said, "since I *am* on Lunnon Bridge, I'll walk over every stone of id, and see what good that will do."

He valiantly gained the far end. Here one house, of all that stood upon the bridge, began to be opened: it was a public-house, and, by a sidelong glance as he passed, Shamus thought that, in the person of a red-cheeked, red-nosed, sunk-eyed, elderly man, who took down the window-shutters, he recognised the proprietor. This person looked at Shamus, in return, with peculiar scrutiny. The wanderer liked neither his regards nor the expression of his countenance, and quickened his steps onward until he cleared the bridge. "But I'll walk it over at the other side, now," he bethought, after allowing the publican time to finish opening his house, and retire out of view.

But repassing the house, the man still ap-

peared, leaning against his door-jamb, and as if waiting for Shamus's return, whom, upon this second occasion, he eyed more attentively than before.

"Sorrow's in him," thought Shamus; "have I two heads on me, that I'm such a sight to him? But who cares about his pair of ferret-eyes? I'll thrudge down the middle stone of it, at any rate." And accordingly he again walked towards the public-house, keeping the middle of the bridge.

"Good-morrow, friend," said the publican, as Shamus a third time passed his door.

"Sarvant kindly, Sir," answered Shamus, respectfully pulling down the brim of his hat, and increasing his pace.

"An early hour you choose for a morning walk," continued his new acquaintance.

"Brave and early, faix, Sir," said Shamus, still hurrying off.

"Stop a bit," resumed the publican. Shamus stood still. "I see you're a countryman of mine—an Irishman; I'd know one of you at a look, though I'm a long time out of the

country. And you're not very well off on London Bridge this morning, either."

"No, indeed, Sir," replied Shamus, beginning to doubt his skill in physiognomy, at the stranger's kind address; "but as badly off as a body 'd wish to be."

"Come over to look for the work?"

"Nien, Sir; but come out this morning to beg a ha'penny, to send me a bit of the road home."

"Well, here's a silver sixpence without asking; and you'd better sit on the bench by the door here, and eat a crust and a cut of cheese, and drink a drop of good ale, to break your fast."

With profuse thanks, Shamus accepted this kind invitation; blaming himself at heart for having allowed his opinion of the charitable publican to be guided by the expression of the man's features. "Handsome is that handsome does," was Shamus's self-correcting reflection.

While eating his bread and cheese, and drinking his strong ale, they conversed freely together, and Shamus's heart opened more and

more to his benefactor. The publican repeatedly asked him what had brought him to London: and though—half out of prudence, and half out of shame—the dreamer at first evaded the question, he felt it at last impossible to refuse a candid answer to his generous friend. "Why, then, Sir, only I am such a big fool for telling it to you, it's what brought me to Lunnon Bridge was a quare dhrame I had at home in Ireland, that tould me just to come here, and I'd find a pot of gould:" for such was the interpretation given by Shamus to the vague admonition of his visionary counsellor.

His companion burst into a loud laugh, saying after it, "Pho, pho, man, don't be so silly as to put faith in nonsensical dreams of that kind. Many a one like it I have had, if I would bother my head with them. Why, within the last ten days, while you were dreaming of finding a pot of gold on London Bridge, I was dreaming of finding a pot of gold in Ireland."

"Murther, and were you, Sir?" asked Shamus, laying down his empty pint.

"Ay, indeed; night after night, an old friar, with a pale face, and dressed all in white and black, and a black skull-cap on his head, came to me in a dream, and bid me go to Ireland, to a certain spot, in a certain county that I know very well, and under the slab of his tomb, that has a cross and some old Romish letters on it, in an old abbey I often saw before now, I'd find a treasure that would make me a rich man all the days of my life."

"Musha, Sir," asked Shamus, scarce able prudently to control his agitation, "and did he tell you that the treasure lay buried there ever so long under the open sky and the ould walls?"

"No; but he told me I was to find the slab covered in by a shed, that a poor man had lately built inside the abbey for himself and his family."

"Whoo, by the powers!" shouted Shamus, at last thrown off his guard by the surpassing joy derived from this intelligence, as well as by the effects of the ale; and, at the same time, he jumped up, cutting a caper with his legs, and flourishing his shilelagh.

"Why, what's the matter with you?" asked his friend, glancing at him a frowning and misgiving look.

"We ax pardon, Sir." Shamus rallied his prudence. "An' sure, sorrow a thing is the matter wid me, only the dhrop, I believe, made me do it, as it ever and always does, good luck to it for the same. An' isn't what we were spaking about the biggest *raumaush** undher the sun, Sir? Only it's the laste bit in the world quare to me, how you'd have the dhrame about your own country, that you didn't see for so many years, Sir,—for twenty long years, I think you said, Sir?" Shamus had now a new object in putting his sly question.

"If I said so, I forgot," answered the publican, his suspicions of Shamus at an end; "but it is about twenty years, indeed, since I left Ireland."

"And by your speech, Sir, and your dacency, I'll engage you were in a good way in the poor place, afore you left it?"

"You guess correctly, friend. (The publican gave way to vanity.) Before misfortune

* Nonsense.

came over me, I possessed, along with many a good hundred acres besides, the very ground that the old ruin I saw, in the foolish dream I told you, stands upon."

"An' so did my curse-o'-God-uncle," thought Shamus, his heart's blood beginning to boil, though, with a great effort, he kept himself seemingly cool. "And this is the man forment me, if he answers another word I'll ax him.—Faix, Sir, and sure that makes your dhrame quarer than ever; and the ground the ould abbey is on, Sir, and the good acres round it, did you say they lay somewhere in the poor country myself came from?"

"What country is that, friend?" demanded the publican again, with a studious frown.

"The ould county Monaghan, sure, Sir," replied Shamus, very deliberately.

"No, but the county of Clare," answered his companion.

"Was it?" screamed Shamus, again springing up; and the cherished hatred of twenty years imprudently bursting out, his uncle lay

stretched at his feet, after a renewed flourish of his cudgel. "And do you know who you are telling it to this morning? Did you ever hear that the sisther you kilt, left a bit of a *gorsoon* behind her, that one day or other might overhear you? Ay," he continued, keeping down the struggling man, "*it is* poor Shamus Dempsy that's kneeling by you; ay—and that has more to tell you. The shed built over the old friar's tombstone was built by the hands you feel on your throttle, and that tombstone is his hearthstone: and——" continued Shamus, beginning to bind the prostrate man with a rope, snatched from the bench near them—"while you lie here a while, an' no one to help you, in the cool of the morning, I'll just take a start of you on the road home, to lift the flag and get the threasure—and follow me, if you dare! You know there's good money bid for your head in Ireland—so here goes! Yes, faith and wid this—*this* to help me on the way!" He snatched up a heavy purse, which had fallen from his uncle's pocket in the struggle. "And

sure, there's neither hurt nor harm in getting back a little of a body's own from you; a bright good morning, uncle, dear !"

Shamus dragged his manacled relative into the shop, quickly shut to and locked the door, flung the key over the house into the Thames, and the next instant was running at headlong speed.

He was not so deficient in the calculations of common sense, as to think himself yet out of his uncle's power. It appeared, indeed, pretty certain, that neither for the violence done to his person, nor for the purse appropriated by his nephew, the outlawed murderer would raise a hue and cry after one, who, aware of his identity, could deliver him up to the laws of his country. But Shamus felt certain that it would be a race, between him and his uncle, for the treasure that lay under the friar's tombstone:—his simple nature supplied no stronger motive for a pursuit, on the part of a man whose life now lay in the breath of his mouth. Full of his own conviction, however, Shamus saw he had not a moment to lose, until the roof of his

shed in the old abbey again sheltered him. So, freely making use of his uncle's guineas, he purchased a strong horse in the outskirts of London, and to the surprise, if not under the heavy suspicions of the vender, set off at a gallop upon the road by which he had, the day before, gained the great metropolis.

A ship was ready to sail at Bristol for Ireland; but, to Shamus's discomfiture, she waited for a wind. He got aboard, however, and in the darksome and squalid hold often knelt down, and with clasped hands, and panting breast, petitioned heaven for a favourable breeze. But from morning until evening the wind remained as he had found it, and Shamus despaired. His uncle, meantime, might have reached some other port, and embarked for their country. In the depth of his anguish he heard a brisk bustle upon deck, clambered up to investigate its cause, and found the ship's sails already half unfurled to a wind that promised to bear him to his native shores by the next morning. The last light of day yet lingered in the heavens: he glanced, now under

way, to the quay of Bristol. A group, who had been watching the departure of the vessel, turned round to note the approach to them of a man, who ran furiously towards the place where they stood, pointing after her, and evidently speaking with vehemence, although no words reached Shamus's ear. Neither was his eye sure of this person's features, but his heart read them distinctly. A boat shot from the quay; the man stood up in it, and its rowers made a signal.

Shamus stepped to the gangway, as if preparing to hurl his pursuer into the sea. The captain took a speaking-trumpet, and, informing the boat that he could not stop an instant, advised her to wait for another merchantman, which would sail in an hour. And, during and after his speech, his vessel ploughed cheerily on, making as much way as she was adapted to accomplish.

Shamus's bosom felt lightened of its immediate terror, but not freed of apprehension for the future. The ship that was to sail in an hour haunted his thoughts: he did not leave

the deck, and, although the night proved very dark, his anxious eyes were never turned from the English coast. Unusual fatigue and want of sleep now and then overpowered him, and his senses swam in a wild and snatching slumber; but from this he would start, crying out and clinging to the cordage, as the feverish dream of an instant presented him with the swelling canvass of a fast-sailing ship, which came suddenly bursting through the gloom of midnight, alongside of his own. Morning dawned really to unveil to him the object of his fears, following almost in the wake of her rival. He glanced in the opposite direction, and beheld the shores of Ireland; in another hour he jumped upon them; but his enemy's face watched him from the deck of the companion vessel, now not more than a few ropes' lengths distant.

Shamus mounted a second good horse, and spurred towards home. Often did he look back, but without seeing any cause for increased alarm. As yet, however, the road had been level and winding, and, therefore, could not allow him to span much of it at a glance. After

noon, it ascended a high and lengthened hill, surrounded by wastes of bog. As he gained the summit of this hill, and again looked back, a horseman appeared, sweeping to its foot. Shamus galloped at full speed down the now quickly-falling road; then along its level continuation for about a mile; and then up another eminence, more lengthened, though not so steep as the former; and from it still he looked back, and caught the figure of the horseman breaking over the line of the hill he had passed. For hours such was the character of the chase; until the road narrowed, and began to wind amid an uncultivated and uninhabited mountain wilderness. Here Shamus's horse tripped and fell; the rider, little injured, assisted him to his legs, and, with lash and spur, re-urged him to pursue his course. The animal went forward in a last effort, and, for still another span of time, well befriended his master. A rocky valley, through which both had been galloping, now opened at its further end, presenting to Shamus's eye, in the distance, the sloping ground, and the ruin which, with its mouldering walls,

encircled his poor home; and the setting sun streamed golden rays through the windows and rents of the old abbey.

The fugitive gave a weak cry of joy, and lashed his beast again. The cry seemed to be answered by a shout; and a second time, after a wild plunge, the horse fell, now throwing Shamus off with a force that left him stunned. And yet he heard the hoofs of another horse come thundering down the rocky way; and, while he made a faint effort to rise on his hands, and look at his pursuer, the horse and horseman were very near, and the voice of his uncle cried "Stand!" at the same time that the speaker fired a pistol, of which the ball struck a stone at Shamus's foot. The next moment his uncle, having left his saddle, stood over him, presenting a second pistol, and spoke in a low but distinct voice.

"Spawn of a beggar! This is not merely for the chance of riches given by our dreams, though it seems, in the teeth of all I ever thought, that the devil tells truth at last. No, nor it is not quite for the blow; but it *is* to

close the lips that, with a single word, can kill me. You die, to let me live!"

"Help!"—aspirated Shamus's heart, turning itself to Heaven—"help me, but now, not for the sake of the gould either—but for the sake of them that will be left on the wide world without me—for them help me, great God!"

Hitherto his weakness and confusion had left him passive. Before his uncle spoke the last words, his silent prayer was offered, and Shamus had jumped upon his assailant. They struggled, and dragged each other down. Shamus felt the muzzle of the pistol at his breast; heard it snap—but only snap; he seized and mastered it, and once more his uncle was at the mercy of his nephew. Shamus's hand was raised to deal a good blow; but he checked himself, and addressed the almost senseless ears of his captive.

"No; you're my mother's blood, and a son of hers will never draw it from your heart; but I can make sure of you again,—stop a bit."

He ran to his own prostrate horse, took off its bridle and its saddle-girth, and with both

secured his uncle's limbs, beyond all possibility of the struggler being able to escape from their control.

"There," resumed Shamus, "lie there till we have time to send an ould friend to see you, that, I'll go bail, will take as good care of your four bones as I ever did, my life long. And do you know where I'm going now? You tould me, on Lunnon Bridge, that you knew *that*, at least,"—(pointing to the abbey,)—"ay, and the quare ould Romish hearthstone that's to be found in it. And so, look at this, uncle, honey,"—(he vaulted upon his relation's horse,) "I'm just goin' to lift it off o' the barrel-pot full of good ould gould, and you have only to cry halves, and you' ll get it as sure as that the big divvle is in the town you came from."

Nance Dempsy was nursing her new-born babe, sitting up in her stra, and doing very well after her late illness, when old Noreen tottered in from the front of the ruin, to tell her that "the body they were just speaking about was driving up the hill, mad, like as if 'twas his own sperit in great throuble;" and the lis-

tener had not recovered from her surprise, when Shamus ran into the shed, flung himself, kneeling, by her side, caught her in his arms, then seized her infant, covered it with kisses, and then, roughly throwing it into her lap, turned to the fire-place, raised one of the rocky seats lying near it, poised the ponderous mass over the hearth-stone, and shivered into pieces, with one crash, that solid barrier between him and his visionary world of wealth.

"It's cracked he is, out an' out, of a certainty," said Nance, looking terrified at her husband.

"Nothing else I am!" shouted Shamus, after groping under the broken slab; "An', for a token, get along with yourself out of this, old gran!"

He started up, and seized her by the shoulder: Noreen remonstrated; he stooped for a a stone; she ran; he pursued her to the arches of the ruin; she stopped half way down the descent; he pelted her with clods to the bottom, and along a good piece of her road homeward; and then, dancing back into his wife's presence——

"Now, Nance," he cried, "now that we're by ourselves, what noise is this like!"

"And he took out han'fuls after han'fuls of the ould gould afore her face, my dear," added the original narrator of this story; "an' after the gaugers, and their crony, ould Nick, ran off wid the uncle of him, Nance and he, and the childer, lived together in their father's and mother's house, and if they didn't live and die happy, I wish that you and I may."

THE SUBSTITUTE.

THE SUBSTITUTE.

NAPOLEON wanted a fresh supply of "food for powder," and so urgently, that the time usually allowed, even during the war, between the choice of a conscript and his departure for actual service, became limited upon this occasion to a few days.

In many a village through France, the winter's morning which ushered in the day upon which the peasant lads were to "*tirer leur sort*," in the different adjacent towns, presented scenes of trembling bustle. We are upon the high road outside one little hamlet.

Two young fellows pass us, arm in arm, talking earnestly, though in a low tone. They are brothers, the only support of an aged and feeble mother. The elder being *chef de famille*, since his father's death, is not called upon to attend the mayor and sub-prefect, in the town towards which they walk; he only conveys the younger lad a little way on the road, to bid God bless him, and deliver him from a "*mauvais numero*." You may guess, indeed, from the patched working-dress of the one, that it is not his intention to accompany his (unwillingly) holiday-clad brother far out of the village; and you may infer that the necessity of not missing a single day of agricultural labour sends him back to the farmer's team or barn.—He must retrace his steps already. The brothers stop at the bottom of the first little hill, speak a moment to each other, doff their caps, kiss cheeks, and part. The *cadet* bounds up the road bravely, at once to disguise his feelings and make a little show of response to the call of "glory and country." As the *ainé* repasses you, his step is heavy, his head drooped, his hands clenched,

as they swing at his sides, and his eyes—but he will not let you see *them*.

Another pair approach—a lad and a girl. He is laughing, or doing his best to laugh; she is shedding tears, though sometimes she smiles too. Are they brother and sister?——Hardly. Their arms happen to be interlaced at one another's backs—and observe how expressively he—or she—or both (fie!) kiss. Let them go their ways in peace, and without arousing excessive sympathy. He is the youngest of five stout sons, whose father and mother are living and thriving, and may pretty well be spared as a contribution from his native village to national honour and glory: and though 'tis interesting and pleasing to witness the romantic distress of the young couple,—lovers according to the rules, that is, with the consent of both their families—yet they are *too* young to be married yet a-while; and Arriette will be constant—if she can; and he may come home an officer, or a corporal at least; or if he never come home—why then, Arriette will be very, very much afflicted. They disappear from us over the

hill together, and it seems she has got leave to accompany him to the town, that she may the sooner learn whether he is to "*tomber*" or not.

A middle-aged man and his wife, leaning at either side upon their son, now attract our notice. "Still, one should always live in good hopes, *mon enfant*," says the mother, while passing by us: but even her voice does not support the recommendation of her words. In fact, her hopes of Clovis drawing a "good number," are very slight, and a kind of superstition augments her apprehensions for his lot. Among the peasantry of France it goes as a rule that if one of a family of many sons is cast as a conscript, the others, from time to time, are sure to share his fate: and she has some reason for putting vague faith in the influence of the supposed fatality. About seven years before, her eldest boy, after drawing a "bad number," joined the army, and fell in his first battle-field. Another conscription was ordered, and her second fared as his brother had done. Another, and her third, left her, and soon returned, badly wounded; and now creeps about her cottage

drooping, pale, and unable to work. The fourth is on his way to try his fortune—and he is her last, too—that is, the last able to help her and his father, for little Pierre is only ten. —God speed them, the old couple, this day,—and may they march home, Clovis between them, to supper, a happy pair.

Standing by the road-side to witness the departure of these and many other villagers, for the town, our position was at one of the piers of an avenue of elm trees, which led up to a château of some respectability. Presently voices sounded, coming down the avenue, and many humble groups on the high road stopped to take off their caps, and bow, or else to simper and curtsey, and give their "*bon jour*" to the speakers, who soon joined them.

"Good day, Mademoiselle Hortense—good day, Monsieur François," said many kind and respectful voices, accompanied by the smiles and looks and action which peasants out of France know nothing of.

Mademoiselle Hortense was a young lady of about twenty, her height good, her figure

straight as a poplar, her carriage free, noble—all but haughty—and yet it was simple, too. No one called her beautiful; but every one spoke of the spirit and expression of her face—and indeed it could not be seen once, and soon forgotten. Its complexion was almost Moorish; perhaps her ancestors had not escaped, in times gone, some contact with Oriental blood, when the south of France was partially inhabited by swarthy children of the sun—and from the south, we have heard, her family first came into the almost extreme northern province which is now country to her. Hortense's eye, too—her round, powerful, fascinating black eye, shaded by her intensely black hair, had a fitfully firm glance, such, it is said, (though softened in her,) as struck with astonishment, if with nothing else, the good citizens of Paris, when the bold and brave Marseillois suddenly appeared in their streets, chaunting their tremendous hymn, and glaring upon the new objects around them, with an expression traced to their mixed descent from infidel and Christian. But let not an illustration unfemi-

nize, in the slightest degree, *la belle et douce Hortense*. If nature gave her a feature which truly revealed spirit and power, another was conferred abounding with softness and goodness —her mouth—beautiful mouth! narrow, pulpy, richly-coloured, out-breathing, and constantly putting in play two dimples:—nay, a particular individual has averred that Hortense's eyes, alone with his, were, of all features of her face, the gentlest, most amiable, kindest, best.

However, this is a little too much of Hortense, devotedly as we love her. Her companion, whom the peasants have called Monsieur François, is to be introduced. He was a young man of two-and-twenty, it was said—nay, insisted on—else he would not have appeared in the avenue this morning; and yet, from his slight figure, a little stooped and not strongly knit, and from his boyish, pale, unbearded and unwhiskered face, he did not appear to be as old as the girl who leaned on his arm.

"And is no one to be spared, in these times, Mademoiselle Hortense," continued an old man, after he had saluted her, "not even the best

among us? And must Monsieur François take his chance with the poorest?"

"My brother," answered Hortense, "is proud to take his chance for serving his country and his Emperor, at the side of the other brave youths—no matter how poor—of our district."

"The call to war, Oudard," added François, smiling at his old neighbour, "has never yet been neglected by one of my family."

The old man, with his parting compliment, bowed, put on his battered old hat, and left them. The brother and sister stood still at the bottom of the avenue, both looking in the same direction.

"'Tis time Eugène were here, if he *is* to accompany me to the town," resumed François.

"Yes, indeed," replied Hortense, "and he is not generally so unpunctual;—but, *mon frère*, you must feel the morning air very cold, for you tremble a little?"

"Do I?—'tis nothing, Hortense;—ten minutes' brisk walking towards the town will cure it, if our friend would only come as he promised."

"Here he is, then," said Hortense, as the young man they expected jumped over a stile at the other side of the road, nearly opposite to them.

Eugène was twenty-five; well-formed, well-featured, manly-looking, but rustic. He wanted something of the elevated character which stamped the appearance of Hortense and François, though in such different ways. Hortense, however, did not seem to think contemptuously of his agricultural mannerism, as he walked across the road, bowing and smiling to her. She blushed, to be sure—that is, her deep brunette cheeks became, of a sudden, of a rich, neutralized red colour; but we are certain it was not because she was ashamed of him that Hortense blushed.

After greetings, a few words served to make François and Eugène ready to start for the town. "God bless you, *mon frère!*" said Hortense, offering her cheek, while her noble eyes were now moist and half closed—"God bless you—and though, as you have yourself just said, no man of our ancient family ever

yet turned an indifferent ear to the call of country and of honour, still, *mon frère*"—her voice failed her, and the tears would not keep bounds—" still I will pray, all this day, that for the present, you may be spared to those who love you.—Eugène, good morning!" She turned quickly up the avenue, in her little brown cloak and coarse straw bonnet.

" For glory and country!" cried François, taking his friend's arm to lead him off.

" Stop one moment—I've forgotten just to ask Hortense one word"—said Eugène—and he ran after his mistress.

" Folly!" cried François,—" soft nonsense at the moment we have hard blows to think of!—you may overtake me if you can, Eugène!"—He spoke in a brave, shouting tone, and disappeared from the avenue.

" I will catch you in two jumps," shouted Eugène in return. " Hortense," he continued, joining her, " there will be no one at home with you in the house to-day, except your poor sick mother and the servants."

" Well, Eugène, and what of that?—I thank

you for your anxiety about me—but can I not take care of the house and servants, and of my dear mother, too, for a few hours?—Besides, Antoine" (her elder brother, and *chef de famille*) "may be home from his long journey before evening:—you know he has been many days expected."

"Well, Hortense, good-bye—you know you have not bid me good-bye yet——" (a moment's break here in the dialogue)—"and Hortense—"

"What, Eugène?" as he paused.

"This day, of all days, would not be the day to—"

He stopt short again, but Hortense knew what he meant, and went on for him.

"To receive a visit from your rich rival, Eugène? he—" she continued, contemptuously, "who has the château hard-by, with a window for every day in the year in it?—you are right, my friend. If ever his company was disagreeable to me, it must be till I see you again—you and François, together, I mean.—Eugène—" she paused, in her turn, looked most wistfully

into her lover's face, laid her hand on his arm, and, beginning with the word "François," was about to make an important request: but she suddenly checked herself—and saying—"but no—time enough for that—for even a breath of it,—*when* I shall see you both again—" she again turned from Eugène, and he bounded down the avenue to overtake his friend.

Hortense gained the open space before the enclosed *cour* of the château. It had originally been covered with soft grass, but the constant irruptions of the poultry, pigs, horses, and cows, from the farm, which bounded it on one side at right angles with the château, left it at present little appearance of verdure, or even of uniformity or cleanliness.—We have, indeed, often been outraged in taste and patience, in France, by observing how frequently the immediate vicinity of a respectable and comfortable house is thus littered by the similar economy of fixing the abode of the small farmer, with its almost endless appendages of stables, cow-sheds, sheep-sheds, pig-styes, &c. close with in view and contact. But that is scarcely to our present purpose.

As Hortense, threading her way cautiously between beasts, brutes, and fowls of many kinds, (to speak of nothing else,) approached the farmer's thatched house, she saw his stalwart, though comely daughter, holding out a flat basket of breakfast-mess for the poultry, while she screamed an invitation to them, on their predatory wanderings far and near, in a succession of shrill and nearly diabolical cadences.

" Good day, Mademoiselle," said the maiden, interrupting her summons to the cocks and hens, the turkeys, the ducks, and their offspring of low degree—yet she bawled to her young mistress almost as loud as she had done to them,—" Good day, Mademoiselle—and may God make this day end happily for you."

" The eggs, Madeline, for breakfast," said Hortense distantly, for she did not like the prayer put up by Madeline, for certain reasons —" since I am abroad so early, I may as well take them home myself."

" Ay, ay,—abroad so early, indeed," resumed Madeline—" and too early, for any good is to come of it, I am sure.—Mademoiselle,—if

Monsieur François should *fall* to-day, what is to be done?"

"Done? what do you mean, *ma fille?*" asked Hortense in real or feigned surprise.

"Oh, I have heard my father and my mother talk it over, Mademoiselle—and they say it will be quite impossible to get a substitute, this time, the drain of men is so great everywhere, and the price so very high."

"And who told *thee*, Madeline, or *thy* father or mother, either, that we—my brother and his family—are so poor as not to be able to purchase a substitute—high as the price may be?" asked Hortense, now putting Madeline at her distance, as she used the *tu-toi*—"or, suppose Monsieur François *does* draw a bad number, who told thee he may not prefer to serve his country personally, rather than by a substitute?"

"Hélas, poor Monsieur François!"—sighed Madeline, with a knowing shake of the head.

"Girl!"—cried Hortense—"what dare you say of my brother?"

"Nothing, Mademoiselle—nothing, *sur mon honneur*—it is not I that say it——"

"Say what?"

"Nothing, indeed—nothing, Mademoiselle—only that he has often been sickly and weakly, and might not have health or strength enough for a soldier."

"Pho—the eggs, *ma fille*—and the freshest"—and Hortense soon had them in the little basket, and crossed over to the château, seemingly unconcerned and unmoved by Madeline's chatter, but really and deeply agitated by it.

She did not, however, allow any one in the house to notice her feelings, in her manner. To prepare for the old and feeble mother's descent to breakfast, she closely watched, as was her wont, the labours of the rustic servant, whose business it was to pile up the logs on the hearth in the *sálle à manger*, to wheel round the immense, old-fashioned, half-decayed arm-chair, to their blaze, and sweep, and dust, and arrange, and, in a word, do her best to make the spacious apartment not have the air of being badly and poorly furnished. When, with the assistance of the same attendant, Hortense had placed her mother in her usual seat, the earnest,

fond, coaxing devotion with which she induced the half-doting invalid to take her morning's meal, showed nothing of a reserved care preying upon her very heart. They spoke little together of François, or of the interests of the day connected with him—for in fact, the old woman's mind was so decayed nothing distinctly affected her.

After breakfast, Hortense left her mother to the care of a young girl, and ascended to her brother Antoine's chamber, with the professed purpose of seeing that it was in order for his expected return to his family. "I must keep myself employed, except when I kneel down to pray," was Hortense's mental resolve. "O God grant that Antoine may come back with the money he has gone to borrow of our rich uncle—God grant it?" she continued, entering his chamber. A look around informed her that little was wanted in the arrangement of the apartment. Before she turned out of it, she could not help remarking how like her elder brother's mind and character were many of the appendages of the place, added to it by himself:

—the fowling-pieces, the pistols; an antique sword once wielded by a distinguished warlike ancestor; a wolf-spear; roots of flowers, preserved on rough shelves from the frosts of winter: paper bags of seeds, hung against the wall; ponderous country-made shoes, calling to mind the manful, almost rude tread and stride of their owner, in all weathers, here and there, over the few acres which misfortune had left to the descendants of a once wealthy and powerful family. And for the private library of Antoine, his sister smiled to think how easily its volumes could be numbered; they were in fact but two; one an odd tome of an old fabulous history of France; the other, a great folio quite as old, entitled *La Maison Rustique;* containing loquacious and quaint instructions how to make and keep in order gardens of various kinds, shrubberies, vineyards, pleasure-grounds; how to make all descriptions of wines, and how to brew, and how to bake within doors.

But Hortense did not smile when, by association, her mind, and with it her steps, turned to her younger brother's study, contrived next

his sleeping apartment. Here, as she paused at its door, none of the indications of a rough masculine mind, like Antoine's, were visible; no weapons nor implements of country sport; no spear for the wolf, who was occasionally, though not often, to be met with in the adjacent forests;—no relic of family heroism; no arms of defence; even no symptoms of attention to the garden or the farm. Of books, indeed, there were enough, but all, whether poetical or prosaic, of a soft, or dreamy, or gentle cast; and a guitar lay on a chair beside the student's table; and landscape sketches, mostly unfinished, were pinned to the walls.

"Amiable and beloved François!" sighed Hortense, as she sat to the table—"My brother, my friend, my tutor;—you to whom I owe almost a mind, and whose goodness and gentleness have improved my heart—woman's as it is!—O my brother! my brother!—a merciful Providence grant I may be deceived in my fears for you!" She fell on her knees, and the prayers of Hortense were long and fervid.

The wind entering through a half-opened window, wafted to her side a piece of torn paper, written upon, but blotted and scratched over here and there. Its rustle disturbed her devotions; her eye fixed upon it; she knew her younger brother's hand; and the first words of it, unconsciously perused by Hortense, made her hurry, in spite of herself, through the whole. It was but a fragment of seemingly an aspiration to heaven, torn in pieces by its writer; and, doubtless, he had never meant it for any eye but his own. "But even this is like him," thought Hortense, "the want of presence of mind which, in the nervous bustle of leaving the house this morning, could make him overlook an evidence so tremendous!"

Hortense could decypher only a few sentences of the paper; but she read enough to make her start to her feet from her knees in consternation, anger, and horror; enough to make her mutter, and—(so soon after her prayers)—almost imprecate; enough to make her tear the scrawl into a thousand little bits, and stamp them under her feet, as if she would annihilate them,

and with them the sense of the written words within the breast of her brother. And then she rushed out of the room, her uppermost feeling being that of detestation of it, and almost of him.

But love and pity soon re-asserted themselves over her; and after them came, upon confirmation of her worst fears long indulged, intense, agonizing solicitude, and dread for her own and her family's honour as much as for her brother's. She flung herself on her knees again in her own room, and her only prayer now was, either that François might not draw a bad number that day, or else that Antoine might come back with money to purchase a substitute for him.

The step of a horse in the paved court-yard drew her to a window. It *was* Antoine come back; but, after flying to embrace him, Hortense soon knew that half of her prayer was denied. Their rich relative would not lend him a *sous*, although the necessities of the family, accumulating for years, now seemed to threaten them with literal ruin.

After this, Hortense rested but upon one slight and tremulous hope; to prove which vain or true, she must still wait many hours. For the rest of the day, she scarce opened her lips; and, mostly sitting alone in her chamber, the anguish of suspense was fearful to her. Eugène's rich rival came a wooing, as he often did: she would not descend to him. He loitered in the house and in the gardens: she was inexorable.

At length the winter evening fell—the hour for the return of her brother and her lover. Hortense stole out of the house unobserved down the avenue, and so posted herself within the fences of the road near its termination, that she could observe every one who came by. And, one after the other, the groups who had passed the avenue in the morning, or the greater number of them, appeared returning to the little village, some silent, or only speaking in sad tones, others talking loud and laughing: and now and then was heard the smothered sob, or the repressed lament, of a woman or a girl. The poor *chef de famille* strode by with his only brother (the first group we have noticed in

the morning) whom, after his day's labour, he had gone to meet on his way home; and his Herculean arm encircled the lad's neck, but his head was bent to his chest, and he moaned to himself. Arriette appeared by her lover's side, weeping so determinedly, that his false spirits, the good things he said, and the better things he did, could not make her give over. But Clovis was marched home to supper between his father and mother, a delivered youth; and it seemed, from the occasional difficulty he found in keeping the old man steady by his side, and hindering him from singing in a very loud and very cracked voice, that some good beer or *eau-de-vie* had celebrated, in the town, or on the road, the triumph and joy of the family.

Hortense looked close as each group passed by: her brother came not. But she heard him named, now and then, in whispers, and caught disjointed words and tones which entered into her brain like adders' fangs. She could comprehend that something had already happened, disgraceful—and destroying, because so—to him, to her, to their family—to their ancient honour

and name,—the idols of her worship since childhood, and now the only good left to them all. A daring determination already began to dawn in her mind. The sound of carriage-wheels diverted her and broke it up. She came upon the moonlit road. The heads of François and Eugène appeared, alternately, from the window of the vehicle, as if looking to note if their return was watched for. It was singular to see them come home in a carriage. No matter:—now, at least, she could learn what the whispers of the passing villagers had not yet told her, though they alluded to other things—namely, was François, or was he not, a conscript?

She hurried to meet the carriage. The driver knew her, and pulled up.

"*Ah, ma sœur!*" shouted François, from the window, "*je suis tombé—je suis soldat!*"

Along with the shrinking of her feelings from this announcement, her reason and understanding recoiled upon their own "foregone conclusions." Could François greet her in so *riant*

and brave a tone, if she had done him justice in her former thoughts of him?

Scarcely noticing Eugène, she tenderly and weepingly embraced her brother in the carriage, which now conveyed all up the avenue. François supposed she must be surprised that they had not returned a-foot; but, in fact, as Eugène could tell her, what with getting up so unusually early that morning, and taking a long walk fasting, and then the crowd of the place where they had assembled to draw their lots, he had been put out of sorts, and could scarce muster strength enough to get home without a carriage.

"Were you ill before or after you drew?" asked Hortense.

"Before—no, after, I think—was it, Eugène? —I forget," answered the conscript.

"After," said Eugène, solemnly and sadly.

Hortense spoke not another word, although her brother continued to talk, in a bantering and hearty voice, of the suddenness with which he must enter upon his new trade, and the full practice which the new conscripts were promised

just as suddenly; and how glad he would be to acquire, by the habits of a soldier's life, sufficient hardiness of frame to keep off such absurd fits of faintness as that morning had shown him subject to.

Arrived at the château, Hortense, instead of asking Eugène in, bade him good night in so abstracted a manner that the lover thought her indifferent, and remarked that if his friend Antoine were at home he might not be treated so inhospitably.

"He is at home, Eugène," replied Hortense, (and she felt François start at her side:) "but, even for that reason, you will not ask to sit down among us to-night."

"And why not, Hortense?—has Le Chevalier been visiting here to-day!"

"I do not know—good night—*Mon frère* I wait to have you hand me down:"—in fact, Hortense scarce knew or cared what she said.

"Good night, then," said Eugène, briskly, as he jumped from the carriage before François moved; and then he hastened home.

"Stop one moment, dear Hortense," resumed François in the carriage, now speaking in a low and constrained voice—"Antoine returned you say?—and with the money?"

"With not as much as would purchase a substitute for you, *mon frère*, were substitutes to be had at a franc a-piece."

Her brother sat a moment silently; but she could hear the hissings of his breath between his teeth. At last, at her repeated urging, he descended from the vehicle, and offered her his arm.

"The evening cold affects you as keenly as that of the morning did," she observed, while she leaned on him into the house.

But to her surprise, François appeared in high spirits before her brother and her at supper. She watched him close, however, and now and then noted within his eye, or upon his suddenly changing cheek, or upon his moist forehead, or in his fitful smothered sigh, that which she shuddered to interpret. She noted, too, the expression of his earnest embrace of his brother and herself at parting for the night: and her heart sank within her.

"And I will watch him still," resolved Hortense. And she did so, as closely as circumstances permitted, for hours after he retired to his chamber. François bolted himself in; but she heard his uneven steps about the apartment, his groans, his wretched weeping, his mutterings, after intervals of silence, when she imagined he had cast himself in a chair or across his bed. It must have been towards the dawn of the winter's morning that, after a long pause of inaction, during which no sounds escaped his lips, she caught these sudden words, as once more he started from his chair —"Ay!—that will end it—and for that cowardice itself at last gives me courage:"—and then he walked to the door at which she was listening.

Hortense had scarce time to escape out of his view, and yet keep her eye upon him, when she saw him steal, with a faltering foot, and a haggard face, towards his brother Antoine's chamber. She followed him. The fatigued traveller had left his door open, and now slept profoundly. François, continuing his stealthy

pace, approached the table where his brother had put down, freshly charged, the pistols he had carried with him on his journey. Hortense waited to see no more, but noiselessly flew to act upon a strange though powerful thought which some moments before had possessed her mind. Her paralysed mother never slept in her bed, but passed the nights in an arm-chair, well wrapped up from the cold. With a suddenly-acquired strength, the girl caught up the old woman, ran with her out of the chamber, placed her in her chair inside the threshold of that of François, before he had time to re-enter it, and, standing at her back, waited for him.

The faint screams of the vaguely terrified invalid sounded on his ear, as he staggered, almost blind from agitation, along the corridor, with the pistol in one hand and his night-lamp in the other. Had his mother been dead, and had her ghost confronted him, François could not have felt more consternation than at her sight he did.

"What—what's this, Hortense?" he stam-

mered, his distended eyes wandering to his sister.

"Your mother and I have come to ask you, François, what you are going to do with that pistol?" answered Hortense;—it was still in his hand.—"Give it me, *mon frère!*" she continued, advancing to him: "give it!" she repeated, in a loud tone, as he receded, and, unconscious of the act, hid it behind his back.

"Give it!" echoed his mother, her attention roused by the force of the circumstances—"give it, son François, or I will kneel down and curse you!"—Her shrill and scarcely human voice rang through the château.

He mechanically extended his hand to Hortense: she put the pistol in her bosom.

"Now help me bear our mother to her own room, and then I will speak with you," resumed Hortense. He again obeyed her. An attendant remained with the old woman, and the brother and sister walked back to his apartment.

"I know it all, my brother," said Hortense.

"All—what?" demanded François.

"O François, François, do not ask me to give it a name!—and you know I speak not of what has just happened, but rather what it is that put the black thought into your mind! —my brother, my brother, I *do* know it all!— and, François, I could have preferred, much as I love you, to have seen you in your early grave, and to have taken my place at your side. —O, mercies! mercies! I could have preferred to have perished with you, and with all —mother, brother, and every one of our own name and blood—in utter ruin of worldly prospects—in poverty—in insulted and trampled-down poverty—ay, and in the depths of a common prison. François—all that, and more—anything lips can name, or fancy shadow out, I could have smiled at, my brother, but this— —this!—O François! François!"—She wept bitterly, and wrung her hands.

With scarcely power to pronounce the poor equivocation, he continued to ask what she meant.

"Oh, never!" she resumed, not attending

to him—" never, from generation to generation, has a woman of our house been called a wanton —and O merciful heaven! never, never *before*, from generation to generation, has a man of our house been called a——"

" A what?" he interrupted in false vivacity.

" I was wrong," she answered, changing her tone; I was wrong to approach so nearly giving it a name, when I said I would not: I do not want to hurt you, François."

" Tush!" he cried, assuming a higher tone, though still a false one; I will not bear such vague insult even from you, my sister; tell me, or retire this moment!—tell me what it is that on man of my family has ever *before* been called, but which you would now dare to call *me?*"

" No, no, no—I will not," muttered Hortense.

" Hortense, *I* will call *you* rude and insolent, and false, too, *if* you do not."

Her tears ceased,—her brow grew stern,—she rose from her seat, fixed her eyes on him; and advancing slowly, while he stept back, said—

"Listen, then—A COWARD!"

He started and shivered as if she had discharged at his head the pistol she bore in her bosom.

"Yes, wretched brother!—you *fear*, you *fear!*—your heart chills in your body!——your brain burns like fire—at the thought of the lot you have drawn this day!—you would shriek like a whipt infant to face the noble dangers of a battle-field!—a score of strong men, did they bind you with thongs, and urge you with base lashes, could not drag you, drag you upright, standing on your limbs, to face it! Deny not my words—try not to talk me down! So mighty is the fear at your heart, that, but a moment ago, you would have done self-murder to escape its tortures! And what else would the act have proclaimed?—proclaimed to the world, and to men and women yet unborn, of you and of your name—your ancient, your glorious name! What would have been the comment of mankind upon you, miserable brother!—upon *you*, found a corpse this morning, because chance made you a soldier yesterday!"

He had been swaying from side to side, his head hanging down; now he fell without a word. His sister, all her momentary passion gone, flew to him, knelt at his side, and put her arms around him. He had swooned. She started up for water, put it to his lips, and chafed his temples with it. As he recovered, he heard her plaintive and soft murmurs at his ear, asking his forgiveness, and felt her caresses.

"No, no, my brother—my beloved brother!" she continued; "'tis no fault of yours—however great, however terrible a misfortune—no fault of yours! 'tis the will of God—with, perhaps, my own act. O how often I have thought so, and wept to think it my own act to provoke so dark a judgment! Yes, dear François, until the day when running up to you, of a sudden, I fired Antoine's pistol, only charged with powder, so close to you—until that day you were a brave and reckless boy—infant almost—and then, I fear, some manful nerve or other gave way! But if 'tis even so, a change may again come over you; and till that happens,

let us guard jealously the secret of our honour."

With groans and tears, sitting on the floor, he turned his face from her, covering it with his hands.

"For the present occasion," resumed Hortense, "something must be done."

The action of his figure and attitude showed him more attentive.

"We must find you a substitute."

"How?" he asked, not yet uncovering his face, though he turned anxiously towards her.

"Leave it to me to think of, my brother. True, there is no money in the house, even for our immediate and great wants, much less for the purchase of a substitute; and the only friends we have, Eugène and his family, are almost as poor as we are, and with more claims on them; yet leave it to me;—by to-morrow morning—indeed, this morning at breakfast, you shall know more. Return to your bed; I will go to my own chamber. Farewell, my brother, and only promise that you will wait patiently till breakfast, and all may yet be well."

He gave the promise required. She left him with renewed embraces; recollecting, however, the betraying expression of his own farewell to her and Antoine the previous night, she allowed nothing particular to mark her adieus.

Our story may be ended in not many more words. Noble and strange things are true of women in France, calm English reader, particularly since the old Revolution.

Left alone, François did not obey his sister's exhortation to seek repose in bed. Her engagement to procure a substitute took absorbing possession of his soul. What did she mean to do? How, in fact, could she raise the purchase-money! Vague fears of inconvenience, perhaps of humiliation and suffering to her, crowded upon his mind; and, wrought upon by his great love for his sister, François paced the room, his kindling resolves almost verifying Hortense's half prophecy, that "a change might again come over him."

He watched the progress of the winter morning through his windows. He descended to the

breakfast-room. A note from his sister awaited him upon the table:—

"I am quite sure of obtaining a substitute, only I must be absent some days from home. When you read this, I shall be already distant from you. As you wish me to succeed, make no inquiries about me till we meet. Adieu, dear brother.—HORTENSE."

Agitated with he knew not what terrors, François soon disobeyed the injunction of the last lines. He hastened to question the servants about Hortense's departure from the house. No one had seen her leave it. He spoke with his brother Antoine, who rode off to make inquiries in the neighbourhood.

François himself walked to Eugène's house. The young man had just gone, galloping hard, and in no amiable humour, towards a distant point, on pretended business, and would not return for three days. François walked home again, and in the course of the day saw Antoine come back, without obtaining the slightest information of their sister.

Inquiries and searches were continued for

the better part of three days, in the adjacent town as well as in the country, but without effect. Eugène appeared at the château, agitated with the news of Hortense's elopement. At first, even he could make nothing of it: but, after a moody pause, he smote his thigh, and asked François to accompany him to the house of his rich rival.

They accordingly went thither together. Eugene prophesied either that Hortense would be found under the chevalier's roof, after obtaining money from him to purchase a substitute; or, that the chevalier would be reported absent, no one knew where. Although François indignantly flouted his vile suspicions, yet the jealous lover desired him to call to mind how coldly Hortense had treated her old friend the very last evening they had all been together; and he added, that, although upon that occasion she had told him, Eugène, that she knew nothing of the chevalier's visit in the course of the day, yet he had since had good reason to think that they had spent many hours together in the garden.

Neither of Eugène's prognostics proved true. They saw the chevalier, and his assurances of total ignorance of the present fate of Hortense could not be doubted.

It was the day, and near the hour, when, according to notice received, François was to repair to the town to learn the exact time fixed for his march, as a conscript towards the frontier. Eugène accompanied his friend. In the town, having presented themselves before the proper authorities, they were told that François was now a free man, a substitute having taken his place three days before; and, it was added, that the young person, from some pressing motive not explained, had urgently required, and eventually obtained, written permission to hasten, as soon as he wished, to the head town of the department, where all the conscripts were to assemble by a certain day.

A dreadful though true misgiving seized upon François. He asked to have the features of the substitute described to him. Eugène and he glared, thunderstruck, at each other, while his request was complied with. Fran-

çois, after a moment's pause, requested to know how the substitute had been dressed:—in the details given, he recognised a suit of his own clothes. The name was the last request; and then the friends mounted two good horses. The next day they gained the chief town of the department. A substitute of the name given had set out the day before, with many others freshly come in and classed together at random, to join a corps actually in the field, only a few miles beyond the near frontier. Then François and Eugène put their stout horses to their best.

It was the next morning, just after day-break, that the noise of musketry and cannon reached them on their rapid journey. A short time after, they gained from a height a view of a smart skirmish. French soldiers were in quick retreat over the plain below them.—It would be superfluous to go through all the little events which, in rapid succession, brought the brother and sister together. Enough to say, that François outstripped even Hortense's lover, when he saw her in immediate danger—brought down with a pistol-shot the whiskered and moustached

Prussian whose sabre was descending on her head—and, after delivering her into Eugène's arms, stood his ground in her place, doing his work like a man and a soldier. The change *did* come over him, from that moment. He served many campaigns with honour, and returned to his family, holding some rank as an officer.

For Hortense, we repeat, kind English reader, that she yet lives in the brave country in which we now write; and more, that she wears (whenever she likes) a military decoration, presented to her soon after the facts of her lofty and yet tender heroism had become known to her Imperial Sovereign.

A TALE OF

"THE WHITE BRISTOL."

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The Defiance, a Bristol stage, or, as its numerous officials along the road called it, "The White Bristol," rolled up to town at the rate of nine miles an hour, having four "insides," and fourteen "outsides,"—including a livery servant, rather smuggled, we apprehend, upon the flat of the roof, where he lay at his length, comfortably bedded on a couch of cloaks, great coats, and empty sacks.

It is known to all travellers on the tops of stages, (now a large and diversified portion of the English community, embracing every class,

from the nobleman to the old-clothes-man,) that, be the load of "outsides" full or deficient, or overcharged, it invariably divides itself into three companies, each of which can hold little or no intercourse with the other, although the individuals of each may, if they like, (and they seldom do,) become good friends among themselves. The coachman and the knowing young gentleman, who, before any one else thought of the advantage, "engaged the box-seat," may be regarded as the first of these sets. Detached from their fellow-travellers, they beguile the time with confidential discussions upon "the whip," the turf, the ring, the dog that, at any odds, kills two hundred rats in a minute, or the great cricket match of "Kent against all England;" and, whether from their foremost place upon one of the high roads of this world, or from a sense of exclusiveness worthy of Willis's dancing-rooms, or that they dislike the considerable trouble of half-turning their heads to answer an occasional question from some one behind them, most commonly they gain their journey's end without doing much more than making one

another's acquaintance. The close-packed row, occupying the front edge of the roof, from whom now and then arise those questions which, good-naturedly or satisfactorily at least, are seldom resolved, form the second company. But the most numerous party is to be found at the rear of the coach, where a second row of four slip on and off, and off and on the roof, confronting yet three more human beings, who are half caged up in semicircular iron bars, which, the morning after a journey, leave a yellow-and green mark, and not a comfortable sensation, towards the termination of the lumbar vertebræ.

Elevated above the common sublunary level, our little tale begins, then, upon the top of the White Bristol, and among a full circle of its back outsides. With its first two sets, cut off from us by the length of the roof, or with the isolated lounger stretched along the flat of that roof, we have nothing to do; but our chosen company—some of them at least—shall be severally presented to the reader.

In the right of the iron-railed basket-seat

which jutted beyond all other appurtenances of the manifold machine, sat a smart-dressed, smart-faced young man, who, from the certain kind of leering smile that constantly played in his large grey eyes, and round his gaping mouth, seemed to think himself much better than his circle, yet willing to be inwardly amused at their expense; and he had a town air, and might be an emissary from some "London house" to a Bristol correspondent, now returning to his desk, after transacting his employer's business.

Next to him was a young woman, about twenty, holding on her lap a lively infant just beginning to gabble in its own occult (though for that reason not vague) language, and to kiss its little hand, and to nod its little head, and to point to novel objects, in admiration or inquiry, and, in fact, to go through its first charming intercourse with its kind, and its first observance of the mute creation, which it had been sent here to comprehend, to use, and to enjoy.

At the left of the young woman and her fairy charge sat a man, perhaps upwards of thirty; but the rich, embrowned hue of his counte-

nance, betokening long exposure to foreign suns and weather, would probably induce an over-calculation of his age. There was a lightness—so different from a levity—of expression in his rather handsome features, which, according to the world, belonged certainly to early youth; if indeed one did not account for its attendance upon maturer years, by supposing (what his complexion hinted) that he had passed much of his previous life in the camp or on the wave, cut off from worldly mannerism, and preserving, almost untainted, one of the most bountiful gifts of a good Providence—a cheery and hearty disposition. His observers, upon the present occasion, could not decide, however, in which of the capacities alluded to he might have served his country, for he was as free of military or of naval as he was of social technicality. His plain, peaceful dress, also left curiosity at fault. Indeed, considering that the Peninsular contest still went on, and that few who had a right to exhibit warlike costume usually travelled without it, it was highly probable, after all, that he had acquired his foreign complexion without facing

peril either of the flood or of the field. And the rank which, previous to his ascent to the basket of the White Bristol, he might have held in general society, further appeared doubtful. Awkward or vulgar he could not be called in anything he said or did; yet, in his way of saying or doing anything, polished he as surely was not. Perhaps he *was* polite; but, if so, it was not the politeness of a coterie, nor of a particular country—it was his own; or he had picked it up, here and there, in many countries.

Such were the three passengers who, tightly wedged together, filled the basket of the stage. The first of the four who clung to the confronting roof seemed a very young gentleman. He held his head averted from his opposite companions of the road, looking out upon the fields or the sky: he almost turned his back upon his own row; he dangled one leg over the iron of his perch; and his colourless, thin, rigid face, kept itself as imperturbed as if he had been dead, and his lips as compressed as if they had been settled after death. He, indeed, was ob-

viously an eminent being. And inasmuch as, during the whole journey, he continued to evince his own sense of this superiority in the manner described, he shall henceforward be passed by, just as if, indeed, he had not that day sat on the White Bristol at all, but was really one of the dead-and-gone world he seemed so studious of counterfeiting amid the summer sunshine of our living one.

By his side appeared a man almost as young as he; like him, pointedly averting his eyes from his *vis-à-vis* friends in the basket, and, particularly from the young woman who held the infant; and, still like him, serious and silent as the grave. But he was only a decent-clad, respectable-looking young person; and deep-seated sorrow, or suppressed agitation, instead of stolid assumption, or well-managed superciliousness, characterised *his* taciturnity.

We need say but little of the personage who sat at his left hand. She was a middle-aged, and very fat woman. She held a wicker reticule, of proportions corresponding to herself, in her hand, from under the lid of which peeped

the neck of a small green bottle, often applied, with a care-fraught sigh, to her lips; and after it had been so applied she always slumbered, or only started into waking existence, shrieking faintly, and clinging to her neighbours, as her dreams vividly pictured the coach in the act of breaking down under her. And of the last passenger of our set, whom she crushed against the barred irons of the roof, we *can* say but little. Owing to the point of sight from which we observed the group, we can only avow that a spare-limbed little man *was* there, who now and then ventured an expostulating look close into the face of the unconscious heap of fat, flesh, and clothes—the noontide incubus—the day-mare that oppressed him; or timidly dared to address his opposite neighbour, the supposed 'traveller to a house;' and, in both cases, had nothing for his trouble.

The first individual of our company who, long before the coach started that morning, had mounted behind, was the young woman with the infant. She came quite alone into the inn-yard at Bristol; and after standing at the wheels

some time, and looking timidly and anxiously around her, was at last assisted up by an hostler. The fat woman soon followed, attended by a crowd of friends; and she and they looked bitterly disappointed when the middle seat in the basket appeared already occupied: but a place on the roof, far away from the irons at either hand, was, after much qualification with a great many soft things, deemed a tolerably good substitute. Up sprang, next, the tropical-faced young man, and flung himself into the first vacancy which caught his eye,—namely, that at the young woman's left hand; and the moment he was seated he began to chirp and talk to her charge, and to praise its beauty and its liveliness, and to ask its age; and, when he had been answered, to wonder that there could be so fine and so intelligent a creature of only just thirteen months. Shortly, he had it in his arms, and he and it were very good friends, as also, indeed, were he and its young nurse or nursery-maid, although few words or even looks of hers assured him of the fact. While the helpers put the horses to, the dapper youth, mentioned as sitting

at the young woman's right hand, clambered up: the little sufferer under the stout lady then crept into his infelicitous nook—he might have chosen better, but he seemed too nervous for the effort; and the White Bristol rattled out of the inn-yard, yet wanting, among its rear-outsides, two of the party already enumerated.

But, at the corner of an outlet street, standing alone, with a bundle in his hand, soon appeared the grave or afflicted young man, who afterwards sat between the stout lady and the stupid affected young man: and now there was a succession of little incidents.

As the coach stopped to pick him up, the young woman glanced down, and immediately started, trembled, and grew pale; then she quickly turned her head, drew a shawl, like an awning, over the baby, and let down a thick green veil over her own face. An instant after, she half rose up and looked around her, as if impulsively anxious to descend and abandon the stage; but a doleful sigh seemed to intimate that, on second thoughts, she must of necessity resign herself to her situation, however dis-

agreeable it might prove to be; and, as her sole resource, she held her head steadily turned away from the side of the coach at which she had seen the young man standing, and up which she no doubt concluded he would climb to the top.

Evidently, the causer of her uneasiness had not yet caught a sight of her. But this was soon to happen, notwithstanding her precautions. Instead of ascending the vehicle at the side which it was natural to think he would prefer, he must have gone round to the other, for some sufficient reason; for she had scarce averted her face to that other side, when *his* closely confronted it, emerging in the space left open for gaining the roof. No one except himself could now see her look, on account of the depth and closeness of her bonnet; but excessive surprise first worked in his features: immediately came a fiery blush, and a dropping of his eye, not so intelligible; then, in his turn, he grew very pale, then wavered in his insecure position, and the White Bristol again rolling off, after Mr. Coachee's mere warning of 'hold

fast'—he must have dropped under its wheels, but that his future companions grappled him by the arms and the collar, and dragged him into his seat. Even the youthful nurse, with a loud catching of breath, stretched out one of her hands, unconsciously it would seem, when she witnessed his emotion, and foresaw his danger; but the moment he was in safety, her disowning and repelling manner returned: and after many useless glances, he too assumed the grave estrangement of eye which has before been noticed. This difference there was, however, between their avoidance of one another; hers seemed prompted by dislike, or at at least by anger; his, self-imposed by necessity, whatever that necessity might be.

In a short time their unknown feelings towards each other were again called into play.

The coach had proceeded some miles beyond Bristol, when the automaton young gentleman, doomed to fill the now sole vacant place on the roof, hailed it from the avenue-gate of an elegant mansion a short distance off the road. While the White Bristol pulled up for him, and

while he mounted it, our sun-burnt friend, the early admirer of the engaging infant, suddenly asked the protectress of his favourite—"Is the dear little soul asleep?"

His question revealed the baby's father at once. We have yet no name for him—but, at the sound of the words, he jerked round on his seat and fixed his eyes upon the shawl-awning, which completely hid even the shape of the child, and which, it became obvious, he had not—from his first agitation, and his averted glances afterwards—suspected, until this moment, of covering the little creature whose intimated presence now so much absorbed him.

The young woman answered 'Yes,' to her companion at her left, in a low voice, and without moving. The father had been about to speak; his lips were shaping the words, his hands were stirring at his sides; but when he caught her monosyllable, his straining and glowing eyes grew dim and watery, and his person and features became stilled—all except his under lip, and that he drew in to check its spasm. The child's nurse would not yet look

in the direction where he sat: and in some time he also resumed, with a low, long sigh, the part he, perhaps, thought himself compelled to adopt from the mute dictation of her conduct.

About two hours elapsed, and all our party were silent, and indeed motionless; except that the young exclusive swung his ramrod leg over the iron of the roof, and that the young woman's sun-tanned neighbour felt her shrink, once or twice, as if to relieve herself of some bodily inconvenience; and he looked at her back to ascertain whether or no the iron of the basket chafed her: but she sat forward from it, and he only detected the left arm of the "commercial traveller" (may we be forgiven if we pertinaciously assign to this young gentleman an unworthy rank and calling?) quickly snatched home from his observation. The White Bristol stopped to change horses, and with a little cry the infant awoke. A second time the father's eyes flashed upon the shawl. The nurse partially uncovered her baby, and evidently would have kept it quiet on her knee. But up it

popped its face, now more rosy than ever after a refreshing sleep, and, swinging round, and catching the eye of its late play-fellow, crowed in glee, held out its arms, and writhed, nay kicked, to come to him. He put his hands round it, and petitioned to have it; the young woman let it go, silently and passively—and the next instant it was clasped to its father's breast. "For the first time!" mentally remarked our friend, who, indeed, had willingly allowed his new pet to be snatched from him. And then, humming a tune, he glanced at the mother—for such he at length would have her be. Still she had not turned her head; but it was bent on her hands; and though her bonnet screened the mysteries of her emotion, he felt, from his unavoidable proximity to her, a convulsive shaking of her frame, which intimated that she wept profuse though suppressed tears.

The infant did not like its new acquaintance: his sobs, his ardent kisses and embraces, had not the charm of the chirping, the smiles, and

the playful fondlings of its first patron: and it struggled, and at last cried, to get free. Obviously chagrined, he tried in vain to conciliate it, calling it twenty pretty names, and often looking towards its mother as if he hoped she would at last ask it of him. But even yet she avoided his eye: and yielding to its continued remonstrance, the father, with another heavy sigh, passed it to the arm of his opposite fellow-traveller, and quietness, if not peace, once more reigned among our circle.

The White Bristol had left the city (which has immortalised itself by rejecting, after having chosen, Edmund Burke as its parliamentary representative)—at ten o'clock; and at two, a fierce July sun played fully upon our travellers. The young woman grew faint from the heat, and, taking off her nursing-shawl, exhibited a charming figure, and a fair, delicate, taper neck. To protect the latter from being assimilated with his own complexion, her left hand neighbour put up an umbrella over her. In this situation he again felt her shrink and even

start, and, glancing across her shoulders, saw the arm he had before noticed stealing round her waist.

"You wish the gentleman to keep his arm where it ought to be?" he asked, loud enough to be heard by the whole party.

"What arm? what gentleman?" seconded the infant's father, fiercely.

"Nothing incommodes me now, sir, thank you," she said, replying only to the first speaker. The impertinent arm had been withdrawn.

"And you would rather not be incommoded, in future?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Then I am sure the gentleman will remember,"—speaking over to him.

"He had better, or I will make him remember!" added his ally, bending a hostile glance on (still we hope he is) the commercial scout. And at last, the young woman quickly looked up into the speaker's face, plainly, though mutely, remonstrating against any quarrel on her account; and, had he as promptly responded, they would probably have been better

friends for the rest of their journey. Though he must have been aware of this decision in his favour, he chose, however, to keep his eyes frowningly fixed on the object of his wrath, perhaps somewhat ostentatious of his zeal in her cause, and inclined to make the most of it while she so closely observed him: but the chidden youth, after one of his leering stares, began to study the beauties of the landscape; and all this being rapidly comprehended by the young woman, she bent her head towards her chest, and allowed her too-chivalrous champion to seek her eye, without finding it, at his own convenience.

After day-break, at about half past two, next morning, the White Bristol, now within some fourteen miles of the metropolis, approached a spot where our brown-faced friend had told the coachman to set him down. The party, shaking off the slumber, or the stupor of the short night, engaged themselves in restoring their neglected dress to some degree of good order, suited to the inquisitiveness of 'the garish eye of day.' The stage stopt at the bottom of

a hill in order that the drag might be taken off its wheel. "Coachman," said the person we would seem inclined to be most friendly with,—"over the next hill, about a mile on, you will see a stile among some trees—put me down there; I have to walk across the fields to the village yonder."

The young woman turned fully round, and gazed into his face.

"Yes, my little queen," he continued, catching up the infant from her knee and kissing it,—"good-bye—nearest and dearest must part—so, good-bye. God bless you, your life-long—ay, with every blessing!" (his eyes glistened)—"Look—look at yon pretty, taper, little spire, coming up over the green trees like a lady—that's my land-mark—and 'tis many a long year since I saw it last—look! is it *not* a pretty thing?"

The infant crowed, and jumped on his lap, and looked and pointed as he looked and pointed, just as if it understood him, or even could discern an object at such a distance.

"Ay, indeed is it;—do you know, fairy, I

have seen none half as pretty ever since I parted with it, though I've seen a good many?"

The child looked down upon the road, and directed his attention to another object. This was a man who sat on a stone by the road-side, his knees widely parted, his elbows resting on them, and his head drooping forward so as to hide his features. A small bundle, having a stick thrust through its knot, lay beside him. Had he appeared standing, his stature must have approached the gigantic, although his limbs were gaunt and spare. He wore a low-crowned, narrow-brimmed glazed hat, much battered and bruised; coarse linen trowsers, tarred, rent, and patched; a bluish shirt-frock, also of some linen or cotton quality, and also soiled, and torn, and here and there clumsily patched: the collar of his check shirt was open; and his bare, brown, bony ankles appeared above very old shoes. He seemed exceedingly weary, perhaps after walking all night, for the dust of the road covered him from head to foot; or if he had slept since the sun went down, it might have been in some field by the

road, as was intimated by the blades of new hay which adhered to different parts of his person.

"So tired, brother?" asked the infant's friend. The way-worn, or else dogged man, made no answer; and at that instant the White Bristol, freed of its drag, resumed its speed, cutting short further efforts to draw him into conversation. But the querist noted that, as the coach whisked by, he arose from the stone, took up his stick and bundle, and seemed to turn his face in the direction opposite to its course.

Shortly after, the infant's mother a third time started more vehemently than she had done before. The two champions, looking at her former persecutor, seemed strongly disposed to be angry, but she interrupted them, saying, in great alarm—"No—no—here, behind!"—and looking over the back of her seat, she now screamed at the vision of a great bony hand,—from which tar, and other stains, had been but half washed off,—perhaps worn off—that appeared grasping the iron rail of the basket, close at her elbow: and a louder scream es-

caped her, when, in reply to her first, a man's face—wasted, though youthful, pale, or rather dingy-yellow, though weather-beaten, clouded in coal-black hair that hung, like ropes, down the cheeks, and surmounted by the old glazed hat just seen upon the road-side,—turned upward, and at only the distance of two or three feet, glared its large black eyes into hers. It was, indeed, the tired pedestrian, who, standing upon a trunk that had been swung in chains at the back of the coach, underneath, supported himself by holding the basket-rail with one hand, and some lower stay with the other; thus hoping, unnoticed by coachman or passengers, to get himself conveyed a mile or two on his journey.

The infant echoed its mother's scream; and our party were thrown into some confusion.

"You had better get down, friend," said the sun-burnt traveller. His former seconder more violently interfered. The owner of the raw-boned, gigantic hand took no notice.

"It seems captious to insist with you,"

resumed the first peace-maker; "and only that you frighten the young woman and the child, we would not do so—but come—you really must leave us more to ourselves."

Still the pertinacious hand showed no sign of relaxing its gristly gripe, and still no answer was vouchsafed.

"Strike him to the road!"—cried the infant's father.

"Hush, Tom, hush!" said the young woman, in a low voice, half kind, half commanding.

"Stop"—resumed her less boisterous champion, as Tom (thanks for his name, at last) started up as if to carry into effect his own advice—"stop—coachman!—rid us of a fellow who has got up behind, here."

"Take off his castor, sir, and show it the road—we finds that always fits them rum uns, best," answered Coachee, lashing his horses.

"And a very good way I believe it is—so I'll try it."

Stooping over the seat, he accordingly took off the intruder's hat, and let it fall on the road. What followed was not to have been expected.

The man's face had been turned downward; now he again turned it up, and darted at our friend a very extraordinary look—or rather a succession of looks. The first was hasty, blighting rage; the next—while his gaunt fist worked on the iron—was wild revenge; then he snatched away his hand—it was the right—and clinging to the coach only by the other, allowed his body to swing back, and it and its arm to knit into full strength for a destroying blow:—a second after, either recollecting that his foe was beyond his reach, or that his own precarious position did not admit of success in his attempt, his features and attitude changed into a baleful expression of resolved future vengeance;—his eye flared less, but it burned deeper; his high-boned sunken cheeks grew horribly colourless; his blue lips parted, showing his set teeth; his shoulders fell, and his back-drawn arm and hand dropped at his side. —Some of the spectators laughed, doubtless at the absurdity of such extravagant and impotent anger from such a mean person, and for a provocation so slight, and indeed merited; but

the spectator most concerned did not laugh. He thrilled, as their eyes communed together, if not with alarm, certainly with astonishment; nay, with interest, too; and finally with admiration. He had often seen the human countenance worked with human passion; but the intense animal ferocity of that youthful, wasted, and yet finely featured face;—its distinctness; the deadly frown of those shaggy eyebrows over those beautiful, distorted, devouring eyes;—the mental character that heightened, ennobled the whole—he called it in his own mind, wonderful and magnificent.

And the tone in which the man at last got out words to syllable his enormous passion, well suited the previous eloquence of his countenance; it mastered the noise of the clattering, grinding coach, and the tramping horses, and yet it was not shrill.

"Rascal!" he said—"coward! dog!—I have marked you, till we meet again!—You could not know that in insulting me, you outraged a man above his present appearance—but you *saw* me—you saw me ragged, jaded, hungry,

and yet a man—and when I would only give my blistered feet a little rest—taking me at a cowardly disadvantage—in every way cowardly —you—you—but no matter!—I shall know you another time!—I have looked well at you —ay—marked you, I say, for that other time! —Think of me till it comes!"—and he recklessly let go his hold of the coach, and was flung by its motion prostrate upon the road.

"Strange, very strange!" mused our friend, his feelings divided between the ludicrous of the scene,—so swelling a result from such a silly cause—and sympathy with the hidden character, the perhaps trampled heart, if not shattered mind, he had roused into morbid fury. Then he recollected that the language addressed to him could not have come from a vulgar man: and here his own heart smote him, and he anxiously looked back, grieving for the poor fellow's fall. But the coach had gained, and was descending, at the opposite side, the second hill pointed out by himself to the coachman, and the wayfarer could not be seen.—"Poor wretch! perhaps I have, indeed, treated with

indignity, a spirit not created for its present situation."

His reverie was interrupted by the coach stopping 'at the stile among the trees.' He snatched a parting kiss from the baby, wished its mother many blessings, bowed to his other fellow-travellers, got down, and vaulted over the stile. It had been arranged that his luggage should go on to the next town.

In a few moments he only saw the broad, well-beaten path he had trod so often in childhood, sweeping before him, through meadows of new hay, down to the umbrageous hollow, in which rose his beloved spire. "'Tis still the same," he said—"the very smell of the new-mown hay, and all; see—the stepping-stones over this little bourne—one, two, three—the identical ones, only a little worn—and very little, either—not half as much as I am—ay! the mute, inert things remain the same, while our generations pass away."

On he bounded; the stile which he had just crossed having now sunk below the steep, though pleasant, declivity he was descending.

The spire, too, seemed to subside gradually into its rich trees, as he first gained a level with it, and then walked over ground lower than that upon which it was based. But its top, still seen, grew more distinct—with its old, well-known features, its weather-slating, its ventilation apertures—its very minute differences of colour: and houses of the little clustering village it commanded also began to peep out, here and there, through their embowering foliage.

Tears started to his eyes. He quickened his already quick pace, and hummed an old song of boyhood to divert them back again. A wild shout reached him. He turned; and along a narrow path, meeting his at an angle, raced the wayfarer.

Our friend now felt some real alarm, but only such as a brave man experiences at the prospect of unnatural contest with a maniac, for such he deemed this frantic person to be. It was a very early hour, scarce past three o'clock in the morning: the place was lonely, too: and the humble inhabitants of the village were be-

yond hail, even if any of them had yet left their beds. He was unarmed, and though muscular and active, as well as thoroughly brave, doubted the result of a struggle with the excited strength of the gaunt giant who sought to cope with him. Not altering his pace, he again looked behind. His enemy was twice as far from him as he was from the village. He would walk quicker, and perhaps gain the neighbourhood of human beings before they could come in contact. It had occurred to his mind to imitate his pursuer, and run; but, whatever might be the consequences, his spirit disdainfully rejected the idea.

"Stop!"—he heard ejaculated at a distance behind him—"stop and face me! Coward!"—(when he paid no attention to this command)—"you fear to stop!—you have insulted me, and you fear me!" At these words he did stop, however, and turned round; and then walked coolly to meet his challenger.

The furious man ran forward at great speed; but he often staggered, as if his strength was

failing him; and his broken delivery—for still he spoke—also denoted exhaustion.

"You thought the time I warned you of was not so near at hand—thought, perhaps, that I used idle threats, and that it would never come—but you mistook! And though *now—now*—it *does* come sooner than I myself hoped—be sure I would have tracked you, mile by mile, day by day—ay, till I fell dead on the road between us, or it *should* have come!—Satisfaction for your insult!"—he continued, now ending his wild race a few yards from his foe. "Many outrages I have been obliged to bear, but this I will not!—You ought to have pistols about you—or else near you. Give me one and take another!"

"I have no such things about me or near me—you are mad to talk such nonsense," he was answered.

"Liar!—I should be—I wish I was—mad; but I am not! and you scoff me, because in these rags I demand satisfaction for your ignominious insult?—Come, you have something

like *this*, at least: hold it in your hand, then!" —he drew forth a large pocket-knife.

"Stand off, fellow!—I carry no such weapons; nor will I enter into conflict with a maniac. Stand off, I say, at your peril. You vile murderer—you assassin!—would you thus attack an unarmed traveller with a butcherly knife!"—

"No!" replied the assailant, "I am no cowardly assassin—there goes my weapon"—flinging it far over the hedge. "And now I meet you on equal terms—and it is to grapple for life, villain!"

With these words he rushed furiously upon him. But, avoiding his perilous grasp, our friend sprang aside; and clenching his fist, and coolly summoning his strength, he felled him on the grass—where he lay, overcome by exhaustion, as much as stunned by the blow, although it was, indeed, a good one.

The victor, pity and interest still his predominant feelings, resolved to send some friendly aid to the vanquished, and pursued his way to the village. Entering its narrow and straggling

street, he found greater changes in objects framed by man's hands than he had seen in the features of nature along his meadow path. In one place appeared a new house, where he had expected the familiar face of an old one; in another arose a human dwelling, where, sixteen years ago, the period of his absence from home, bushes had been growing; and on many of the little sign-boards above the humble village shops new names were substituted for those to which his boyish eye had been familiar.

His heart fell, as, now glancing around, now musing, he walked slowly forward. The echoing of his solitary footsteps through the slumbering village, heightened the sadness of his mood into a feeling of desolation. "I have thought of it by day, and dreamt of it by night, and it is not *old home* to me after all," he said.

Yielding to a heavy foreboding, he now almost feared to place himself before the one, well-remembered house, which he had travelled far to enter. He leaned on the swinging stile of the church-yard, that stood between him and

it (and how emphatically between him and it he thrilled to think) and gazed up at the old church steeple. A sudden fancy took him, which he evasively expressed to his own mind —"I will turn in here, and read the headstones to see how many old friends are gone." And on the headstones he found, indeed, most of the names he had missed from the sign-boards. But, at a very humble one he stopped and trembled. It was not higher than his knee, and only bore the inscription—"M. H. 1809, aged 56." They were, however, the initials of his mother's name—and such might be her age, too, four years previously, that is, in 1809. Now he ran out of the church-yard towards the once decent cottage in which that good mother had—(until he last kissed her, and left her to brave the world for their common advantage)—been the tutoress of his heart and mind. It was a roofless ruin. He leaned his arm and head against its door-jamb and wept loudly.

A noise in the street aroused him, and, looking up, he saw a little lame old man wheeling a

wheel-barrow, in which were a shovel and a broom. At a glance he recognised 'Old Master Martin,' who, as long as he could remember, used to rise every morning, hours before any one else in the village, to scrape the streets, that he might sell the produce—and live; and he alone, this decrepid, age-stricken, solitary being, the despised of his own humble community—he, alone, seemed, to the eye of our friend, unchanged in feature, nay, in garb, after the wear and tear of sixteen years. He resolved to speak with Martin; for still he cherished a doubt of the headstone.

The old man had rested his wheel-barrow, and now stood leaning on his broom-handle, attentively eyeing the stranger. They exchanged salutations, and entered into conversation. Recollecting the names he had seen in the churchyard, the traveller—thus introducing his real topic — severally inquired after the persons whom they had once designated, and got an account of their several deaths, and the manner of their deaths. "There was a widow of the

name of Martha Hall, too," continued the querist.

"And so there *was*," replied old Martin, dropping his chin on his breast;—our friend's doubt subsided;—"and *her* removal happened just four years ago, come harvest; and it come about by reason of the first letter she had from her son Dick as went after her eldest son to the Hindees, while her daughter Jane was in sarvice in Lon'on, and old Martha herself in the work'se."

"The workhouse?—and her little girl in service?—how could that be? I have reason to know that her son George regularly sent her remittances, proportioned to his pay, from the time he enlisted as a private soldier till he rose to be adjutant to his regiment; and his very last remittance was considerable, though the former ones were slight."

"And *we* know that, too," said Master Martin; "but we know, moreover, that the last money didn't come to hand as soon as it ought to have come; nor till after Dick Hall went to

seek his fortune—(a bad one it turned up for him;) nor till after little Jane went to Lon'on, and her mother on the parish, and then to the church-yard, just because it didn't."

"And Richard Hall followed his brother to India—more than four years ago, as it appears? And how was his fortune so bad?"

"Why, instead of letting him work his passage out to the Hindees after brother George, —(that he loved dearly, though he couldn't be said to know him, as why, Dick was only in his fourth when George left us, and the girl only in her second)—they pressed him for a man-o' war's-man, down on the coast; and took him round the world to fight the French, just where-ever they liked; ay, and gave him the rope's-end, I believe, when he wouldn't take to the tar, at the first setting off."

"Good God! bad fortune, indeed, for a lad who had and has a friend willing and able to help him to a better! His brother often wrote to have his education attended to; and at twenty he must have been a clever boy."

"The cleverest among us; and the chap had

the spirit of a lord; may be his fault lay on that side: and there came another letter from him t'other day, for his mother, like the first; but as she, poor old soul, was removed, his uncle Luckhurst opened it, and he said he had just got his discharge at last, and that he would start after it, not waiting for a shilling to help him on the road, to see her and Jane."

"Is Jane Hall still in London?"

"No; poor wench! she has had her own troubles: married a London husband, two years ago —a good tradesman, but a wild 'un;—he broke, and ran away from her; and she came down to us, to have her baby; and then she took it with her to Bristol, where she'd got a new place: but we are soon to see her again: her uncle says to-morrow, or next day, if not to-day."

George Hall had reverted, with certain misgivings, to more than one of his late acquaintances of the road, during the narrative of the old chronicler. Now his heart swelled with emotion, as he saw, coming down the street, three of those acquaintances. They were the

young woman and her child, and the serious young man to whom, during the journey, she would not speak. At present, however, she leaned on his arm, and he carried her infant. They must have descended from the White Bristol immediately after George Hall, although his bounding speed did not at first allow him to take notice, and the falling ground he traversed soon after, caused him to lose sight of 'the stile among the trees.' Perhaps, too—(indeed it afterwards appeared to be the case)—they had tarried some time, just inside the stile, to go through the explanations which, notwithstanding the young woman's determined coldness on the road, ultimately produced the good understanding that seemed re-established between them.

The young woman's eyes met those of George Hall, the moment she appeared in the street; and the interest with which they continued to regard each other was probably of a similar kind. She passed him, and proceeded to the door of a house well known to him as his uncle Luckhurst's;—this was the presumptive proof

he wanted; and before she could knock, her brother had made himself known to her.

After their first embrace, and his renewed caresses of his infant favourite, and his salutation of her husband—(whom Jane whispered was very contrite and quite a changed man, and had been lately an industrious one, and now brought home proofs of the fact to his wife and child)—George Hall led his sister over the crumbling threshold of their former home—seated her on the ruins of a partition wall, which had once bounded their little parlour, and there heard her repetition of old Master Martin's stories. Jane touched lightly on her own sorrows; but wept much while she recounted those of her mother; and even more while she reverted to their brother Richard, whom she endowed with mental and bodily merits, even beyond old Martin's eulogy. At twenty, when he left the village, Richard was the handsomest, tallest, best-hearted, best-learned lad in the whole parish; somewhat too high in his notions, perhaps; but not so, after all, considering the high expectations his brother George

had allowed him to form, and the gentleman's education he had sent means to afford him, and for which Richard loved George more than for any other proof of affection. "But God knows how hard usage, and great cruelty—too much even for the meanest spirit to bear—may have changed his nature," continued Jane; "and, indeed, in the last letter he sent home, and that uncle Luckhurst sent to me, there is a bitterness, and a sad, sad carelessness of mind, that makes me fear for him."

Their melancholy conversation continued; and George, holding his sister's hand, caused her to rest her head upon his shoulder, while she wept. In this situation they suddenly heard some one jump in through a window-hole at their backs, and come crashing among the rubbish;—and before George Hall could stand on his guard, he was overpowered and dragged to the ground, and the revengeful wayfarer held his distorted face close to our friend's, keeping him down by the throat, and bending over him, while, amid Jane's shrieks, he cried out, "Soh!—here I find you, miscreant,—

here! and by this woman's side!—Jane!" he continued almost shrieking, as he turned to her, "I knew you this morning at one glance, though, at one glance, you could not know me; but I would not ask you to recollect me, because my rags must have shamed you; and perhaps for another reason—perhaps to watch your conduct with this bully of yours—this scoffing, sneering, braggart, who, for *your* smiles—for *your* ruin!"—he bent lower over our prostrate friend, and griped him closer—"for your ruin—for my eternal shame—and for his own destruction—dared to insult your brother!"

Jane redoubled her screams, and clapped her hands, crying, "Richard! Richard!—stop! stop!" Her frenzy did not allow her to say more; but George Hall shook off the young man's gripe with a great effort, and jumped to his feet, as he said, "Yes, Richard, stop! for I, too, am Jane's brother."

Some months following, on the spot where this happened, the two brothers, their sister, her child, and her husband, made a happy family party, at a 'housewarming-dinner,' given

by George Hall, after he had built a commodious and handsome house upon the site of the old cottage; and his youngest acquaintance of 'The White Bristol' sat on his knee.

THE STOLEN SHEEP.

THE STOLEN SHEEP.

The faults of the lower orders of the Irish are sufficiently well known: perhaps their virtues have not been proportionately observed, or recorded for observation. At all events, it is but justice to them, and it cannot conflict with any established policy, or do any one harm, to exhibit them in a favourable light to their British fellow-subjects, as often as strict truth will permit. In this view the following story is written—the following facts, indeed; for we have a newspaper report before us, which shall be very slightly departed from, while we make our copy of it.

The Irish plague, called typhus fever, raged in its terrors. In almost every third cabin there was a corpse daily. In every one, without an exception, there was what had made the corpse —hunger. It need not be added that there was poverty too. The poor could not bury their dead. From mixed motives of self-protection, terror, and benevolence, those in easier circumstances exerted themselves to administer relief, in different ways. Money was subscribed —(then came England's munificent donation— God prosper her for it!)—wholesome food, or food as wholesome as a bad season permitted, was provided; and men of respectability, bracing their minds to avert the danger that threatened themselves, by boldly facing it, entered the infected house, where death reigned almost alone, and took measures to cleanse and purify the close cribbed air, and the rough, bare walls. Before proceeding to our story, let us be permitted to mention some general marks of Irish virtue, which, under those circumstances, we personally noticed. In poverty, in abject misery, and at a short and fearful notice, the

poor man died like a Christian. He gave vent to none of the poor man's complaints or invectives against the rich man who had neglected him, or who, he might have supposed, had done so, till it was too late. Except for a glance,—and, doubtless, a little inward pang while he glanced—at the starving and perhaps infected wife, or child, or old parent as helpless as the child,—he blessed God, and died. The appearance of a comforter at his wretched bedside, even when he knew comfort to be useless, made his heart grateful, and his spasmed lips eloquent in thanks. In cases of indescribable misery—some members of his family lying lifeless before his eyes, or else some dying,—stretched upon damp and unclean straw, on an earthen floor, without cordial for his lips, or potatoes to point out to a crying infant,—often we have heard him whisper to himself (and to Another who heard him!) "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord." Such men need not always make bad neighbours.

In the early progress of the fever, before the

more affluent roused themselves to avert its career, we cross the threshold of an individual peasant. His young wife lies dead; his second child is dying at her side; he has just sunk into a corner himself, under the first stun of disease, long resisted. The only persons of his family who have escaped contagion, and are likely to escape it, are his old father, who sits weeping feebly upon the hob, and his first born, a boy of three or four years, who, standing between the old man's knees, cries also—for food.

We visit the young peasant's abode some time after. He has not sunk under 'the sickness.' He is fast regaining his strength, even without proper nourishment; he can creep out of doors, and sit in the sun. But in the expression of his sallow and emaciated face, there is no joy for his escape from the grave, as he sits there alone, silent and brooding. His father, and his surviving child, are still hungry —more hungry, indeed, and more helpless than ever; for the neighbours who had relieved the family with a potatoe and a mug of sour milk, are now stricken down themselves, and want

assistance to a much greater extent than they can give it.

"I wish Mr. Evans was in the place," cogitated Michaul Carroll; "a body could spake forn'ent him, and not spake for nothin', for all that he's an Englishman; and I don't like the thoughts o' goin' up to the house to the steward's face—it wouldn't turn kind to a body. May be he'd soon come home to us, the masther himself."

Another fortnight elapsed. Michaul's hope proved vain. Mr. Evans was still in London; though a regular resident on his small Irish estate, since it had come into his possession, business unfortunately—and he would have said so himself—now kept him an unusually long time absent. Thus disappointed, Michaul overcame his repugnance to appear before the 'hard' steward. He only asked for work, however. There was none to be had. He turned his slow and still feeble foot into the adjacent town. It was market-day, and he took up his place among a crowd of other claimants for agricultural employment, shouldering a spade,

as did each of his companions. Many farmers came to the well-known 'stannin,' and hired men at his right and at his left, but no one addressed Michaul. Once or twice, indeed, touched perhaps by his sidelong looks of beseeching misery, a farmer stopt a moment before him, and glanced over his figure; but his worn and almost shaking limbs giving little promise of present vigour in the working field, worldly prudence soon conquered the humane feeling which started up towards him in the man's heart, and with a choking in his throat, poor Michaul saw the arbiter of his fate pass on.

He walked homeward, without having broken his fast that day. "Bud, *musha*, what's the harm o' that," he said to himself; "only here's the ould father, an' *her* pet boy, the weenock, without a pyatee either. Well *asthore*, if they can't have the pyatees, they must have betther food—that's all;—ay—" he muttered, clenching his hands at his sides, and imprecating fearfully in Irish—"an' so they must."

He left his house again, and walked a good

way to beg a few potatoes. He did not come back quite empty-handed. His father and his child had a meal. He ate but a few himself: and when he was about to lie down in his corner for the night, he said to the old man, across the room—"Don't be a-crying to-night, father—you and the child, there; but sleep well, and ye'll have the .good break'ast afore ye in the mornin'."

"The good break'ast, *ma-bauchal?** a-then, an' where 'ill id come from?"

"A body promised it to me, father."

"*Avich?* Michaul, an' sure is't fun you're making of us, now, at any rate. Bud, the good night, *a chorra*,† an' my blessin' on your head, Michaul; an' if we keep trust in the good God, an' ax his blessin', too, mornin' an' evenin' gettin' up an' lyin' down, He'll be a friend to us at last: that was always an' ever my word to you, poor boy, since you was the years o' your own weenock, now fast asleep at my side; an' it's my word to you, now, *ma-bouchal;* an' you won't forget id; and there's one sayin' the

* My boy. † Term of endearment.

same to you, out o' heaven, this night—herself, an' her little angel-in-glory by the hand, Michaul *a-vourneen*."

Having thus spoken in the fervent and rather exaggerated, though every-day, words of pious allusion of the Irish poor man, old Carroll soon dropt asleep, with his arms round his little grandson, both overcome by an unusually abundant meal. In the middle of the night he was awakened by a stealthy noise. Without moving, he cast his eyes round the cabin. A small window, through which the moon broke brilliantly, was open. He called to his son, but received no answer. He called again and again: all remained silent. He arose and crept to the corner where Michaul had lain down. It was empty. He looked out through the window into the moonlight. The figure of a man appeared at a distance, just about to enter a pasture-field belonging to Mr. Evans.

The old man leaned his back against the wall of the cabin, trembling with sudden and terrible misgivings. With him the language of

virtue, which we have heard him utter, was not cant. In early prosperity, in subsequent misfortunes, and in his late and present excess of wretchedness, he had never swerved in practice from the spirit of his own exhortations to honesty before men, and love for, and dependance upon God, which, as he has truly said, he had constantly addressed to his son, since his earliest childhood. And hitherto that son had, indeed, walked by his precepts, further assisted by a regular observance of the duties of his religion. Was he now about to turn into another path? to bring shame on his father in his old age? to put a stain on their family and their name, "the name that a rogue or a bould woman never bore?" continued old Carroll, indulging in some of the pride and egotism for which an Irish peasant is, under his circumstances, remarkable. And then came the thought of the personal peril incurred by Michaul; and his agitation, incurred by the feebleness of age, nearly overpowered him.

He was sitting on the floor, shivering like one in an ague-fit, when he heard steps outside

the house. He listened, and they ceased: but the familiar noise of an old barn door creaking on its crazy hinges, came on his ear. It was now day-dawn. He dressed himself; stole out, cautiously; peeped into the barn, through a chink of the door, and all he had feared met full confirmation. There, indeed, sat Michaul, busily and earnestly engaged, with a frowning brow and a haggard face, in quartering the animal he had stolen from Mr. Evans's field.

The sight sickened the father,—the blood on his son's hands, and all. He was barely able to keep himself from falling. A fear, if not a dislike, of the unhappy culprit also came upon him. His unconscious impulse was to re-enter their cabin unperceived, without speaking a word; he succeeded in doing so; and then he fastened the door again, and undressed, and resumed his place beside his innocent little grandson.

About an hour after, Michaul came in cautiously through the still open window, and also undressed and reclined on his straw, after

glancing towards his father's bed, who pretended to be asleep. At the usual time for arising, old Carroll saw him suddenly jump up, and prepare to go abroad. He spoke to him, leaning on his elbow.

"And what *bollg** is on you now, *ma-bauchal?*"

"Going for the good breakfast I promised you, father dear."

"An' who's the good Christhin 'll give id to us, Michaul?"

"Oh, you'll know that, soon, father: now, a good bye:"—he hurried to the door.

"A good-bye, then, Michaul; bud, tell me, what's that on your hand?"

"No—nothin'," stammered Michaul, changing colour, as he hastily examined the hand himself; "nothin' is on id: what could there be?" (nor was there, for he had very carefully removed all evidence of guilt from his person: and the father's question was asked upon grounds distinct from anything he then saw.)

"Well, *avich*, an' sure I didn't say anything

* What are you about?

was on it wrong; or anything to make you look so quare, an' spake so sthrange to your father, this mornin',—only I'll ax you, Michaul, over agin, who has took such a sudd'n likin' to us, to send us the good break'ast?—an' answer me sthraight, Michaul—what is id to be, that you call it so *good?*

"The good mate, father;"—he was again passing the threshold.

"Stop!" cried his father; "stop, an' turn forn'ent me. Mate?—the good mate?—What 'ud bring mate into our poor house, Michaul? Tell me, I bid you again an' again, who is to give id to you?"

"Why, as I said afore, father, a body that——"

"A body that thieved id, Michaul Carroll?" added the old man, as his son hesitated, walking close up to the culprit; "a body that thieved id, an' no other body. Don't think to blind me, Michaul. I am ould, to be sure; but sense enough is left in me to look round among the neighbours, in my own mind, an' know that none of 'em that has the will, has the

power to send us the mate for our break'ast, in an honest way. An' I don't say, outright, that you had the same thought wid me, when you consented to' take it from a thief—I don't mean to say that you'd go to turn a thief's receiver, at this hour o' your life, an' afther growin' up from a boy to a man widout bringin' a spot o' shame on yourself, or on your weenock, or on one of us. No; I won't say that. Your heart was scalded, Michaul, an' your mind was darkened, for a start; an' the thought o' getting comfort for the ould father, an' for the little son, made you consent in a hurry, widout lookin' well afore you, or widout lookin' up to your good God."

"Father, father, let me alone! don't spake them words to me," interrupted Michaul, sitting on a stool, and spreading his large and hard hands over his face.

"Well, thin, an' I won't, *avich*: I won't;—nothin' to throuble you, sure: I didn't mean id;—only this, *a-vourneen*, don't bring a mouthful o' the bad, unlucky victuals into this cabin; the pyaties, the wild berries o' the bush, the

wild roots o' the arth, will be sweeter to us, Michaul; the hunger itself will be sweeter; an' when we give God thanks afther our poor meal, or afther no meal at all, our hearts will be lighter, and our hopes for to morrow sthronger, *avich-ma-chree*, than if we faisted on the fat o' the land, but couldn't ax a blessin' on our faist."

"Well, thin, *I* won't either, father: I won't:—an' sure you have your way now. I'll only go out a little while from you—to beg; or else, as you say, to root down in the ground, with my nails, like a baste-brute, for our break'ast."

"My vourneen you are, Michaul, an' my blessin' on your head; yes, to be sure, *avich*, beg, an' I'll beg wid you—sorrow a shame is in that:—No; but a good deed, Michaul, when it's done to keep us honest. So come; we'll go among the Christhins together. Only, before we go, Michaul, my own dear son, tell me—tell one thing."

"What, father?" Michaul began to suspect.

"Never be afraid to tell me, Michaul Carroll,

ma bauchal! I won't—I can't be angry wid you now. You are sorry; an' your Father in heaven forgives you, and so do I. But you know, *avich*, there would be danger in quitting the place widout hiding well every scrap of anything that could tell on us."

"Tell on us! What can tell on us?" demanded Michaul; "what's in the place to tell on us?"

"Nothin' in the cabin, I know, Michaul; but——"

"But what, father?"

"Have you left nothing in the way, out there?" whispered the old man, pointing towards the barn.

"Out there? Where? What? What do you mean at all, now, father? Sure you know it's your ownsef has kep me from as much as laying a hand on it."

"Ay, to-day-mornin';—bud you laid a hand on it last night, *avich*, an' so——"

"*Curp-an-duoul!*" imprecated Michaul—"this is too bad, at any rate; no, I didn't—last

night, or any other night—let me alone, I bid you, father.'

"Come back again, Michaul," commanded old Carroll, as the son once more hurried to the door: and his words were instantly obeyed. Michaul, after a glance abroad, and a start, which the old man did not notice, paced to the middle of the floor, hanging his head, and saying in a low voice—"Hushth, now, father—it's time."

"No, Michaul, I will not hushth; an' it is not time; come out with me to the barn."

"Hushth!" repeated Michaul, whispering sharply: he had glanced sideways to the square patch of strong morning sun-light on the ground of the cabin, defined there by the shape of the open door, and saw it intruded upon by the shadow of a man's bust leaning forward in an earnest posture.

"Is id in your mind to go back into your sin, Michaul, an' tell me you were not in the barn, at day-break, the mornin'?" asked his father, still unconscious of a reason for silence.

"Arrah, hushth, ould man!" Michaul made a hasty sign towards the door, but was disregarded.

"I saw you in id," pursued old Carroll, sternly: "ay, and at your work in id, too."

"What's that you're sayin', ould Peery Carroll?" demanded a well-known voice.

"Enough—to hang his son," whispered Michaul to his father, as Mr. Evans's land-steward, followed by his herdsman and two policemen, entered the cabin. In a few minutes afterwards, the policemen had in charge the dismembered carcase of the sheep, dug up out of the floor of the barn, and were escorting Michaul, handcuffed, to the county gaol, in the vicinity of the next town. They could find no trace of the animal's skin, though they sought attentively for it; and this seemed to disappoint them and the steward a good deal.

From the moment that they entered the cabin, till their departure, old Carroll did not speak a word. Without knowing it, as it seemed, he sat down on his straw bed, and remained staring stupidly around him, or at one or an-

other of his visitors. When Michaul was about to leave the wretched abode, he paced quickly towards his father, and holding out his ironed hands, and turning his cheek for a kiss, said, smiling miserably—"God be wid you, father dear." Still the old man was silent, and the prisoner and all his attendants passed out on the road. But it was then the agony of old Carroll assumed a distinctness. Uttering a fearful cry, he snatched up his still sleeping little grandson, ran with the boy in his arms till he overtook Michaul; and, kneeling down before him in the dust, said—"I ax pardon o' you, *avich*—won't you tell me I have id afore you go? an' here, I've brought little Peery for you to kiss; you forgot *him, a-vourneen.*

"No, father, I didn't," answered Michaul, as he stooped to kiss the child; an' get up, father, get up; my hands are not my own, or I wonldn't let you do that afore your son. Get up, there's nothin' for you to throuble yourself about; that is, I mean, I have nothing to forgive you: no, but everything to be thankful for, an' to love you for; you were always an' ever the good fa-

ther to me; an'——" The many strong and bitter feelings which till now he had almost perfectly kept in, found full vent, and poor Michaul could not go on. The parting from his father, however, so different from what it had promised to be, comforted him. The old man held him in his arms, and wept on his neck. They were separated with difficulty.

Peery Carroll, sitting on the road-side after he lost sight of the prisoner, and holding his screaming grandson on his knees, thought the cup of his trials was full. By his imprudence he had fixed the proof of guilt on his own child; that reflection was enough for him, and he could indulge it only generally. But he was yet to conceive exactly in what a dilemma he had involved himself as well as Michaul. The policemen came back to compel his appearance before the magistrate; and when the little child had been disposed of in a neighbouring cabin, he understood, to his consternation and horror, that he was to be the chief witness against the sheep-stealer. Mr. Evans's steward knew well the meaning of the words he had overheard him

say in the cabin, and that if compelled to swear all he was aware of, no doubt would exist of the criminality of Michaul in the eyes of a jury. "'Tis a sthrange thing to ax a father to do," muttered Peery, more than once, as he proceeded to the magistrates; "it's a very sthrange thing."

The magistrate proved to be a humane man. Notwithstanding the zeal of the steward and the policemen, he committed Michaul for trial, without continuing to press the hesitating and bewildered old Peery into any detailed evidence; his nature seemed to rise against the task, and he said to the steward—"I have enough of facts for making out a committal; if you think the father will be necessary on the trial, subpœna him."

The steward objected that Peery would abscond, and demanded to have him bound over to prosecute, on two sureties, solvent and respectable. The magistrate assented; Peery could name no bail; and consequently he also was marched to prison, though prohibited from holding the least intercourse with Michaul.

The assizes soon came on. Michaul was arraigned; and, during his plea of "not guilty," his father appeared, unseen by him, in the gaoler's custody, at the back of the dock, or rather in an inner dock. The trial excited a keen and painful interest in the court, the bar, the jury-box, and the crowds of spectators. It was universally known that a son had stolen a sheep, partly to feed a starving father; and that out of the mouth of that father it was now sought to condemn him. "What will the old man do?" was the general question which ran through the assembly: and while few of the lower orders could contemplate the possibility of his swearing to the truth, many of their betters scarce hesitated to make out for him a case of natural necessity to swear falsely.

The trial began. The first witness, the herdsman, proved the loss of the sheep, and the finding the dismembered carcass in the old barn. The policemen and the steward followed to the same effect, and the latter added the allusions which he had heard the father make to the son, upon the morning of the arrest of the latter.

The steward went down from the table. There was a pause, and complete silence, which the attorney for the prosecution broke by saying to the crier, deliberately, " Call Peery Carroll."

" Here, Sir," immediately answered Peery, as the gaoler led him by a side-door, out of the back dock to the table. The prisoner started round; but the new witness against him had passed for an instant into the crowd.

The next instant, old Peery was seen ascending the table, assisted by the gaoler, and by many other commiserating hands, near him. Every glance fixed on his face. The barristers looked wistfully up from their seats round the table; the judge put a glass to his eye and seemed to study his features attentively. Among the audience, there ran a low but expressive murmur of pity and interest.

Though much emaciated by confinement, anguish, and suspense, Peery's cheeks had a flush, and his weak blue eyes glittered. The half-gaping expression of his parched and haggard lips was miserable to see. And yet he did not tremble much, nor appear so confounded as upon the day of his visit to the magistrate.

The moment he stood upright on the table, he turned himself fully to the judge, without a glance towards the dock.

"Sit down, sit down, poor man," said the judge.

"Thanks to you, my lord, I will," answered Peery, "only, first, I'd ax you to let me kneel, for a little start;" and he accordingly did kneel, and after bowing his head, and forming the sign of the cross on his forehead, he looked up, and said—"My Judge in heaven above, 'tis you I pray to keep me to my duty, afore my earthly judge, this day;—amen!"—and then, repeating the sign of the cross, he seated himself.

The examination of the witness commenced, and humanely proceeded as follows — (the counsel for the prosecution taking no notice of the superfluity of Peery's answers).

"Do you know Michaul, or Michael, Carroll, the prisoner at the bar?"

"Afore that night, Sir, I believed I knew him well; every thought of his mind, every bit of the heart in his body; afore that night, no

living crature could throw a word at Michaul Carrol, or say he ever forgot his father' rearin', or his love of his good God;—an' sure the people are afther telling you by this time, how it came about that night—an' you, my lord,—an' ye, gintlemen,—an' all good Christians that hear me;—here I am to help to hang him—my own boy, and my only one—but, for all that, gintleman, ye ought to think of it; 'twas for the weenoch and the ould father that he done it;—indeed, an'deed, we hadn't a pyatee in the place; an' the sickness was among us, a start afore; it took the wife from him, and another babby; an' id had himself down, a week or so beforehand; an' all that day he was looking for work, but couldn't get a hand's turn to do; an' that's the way it was; not a mouthful for me an' little Peery; an', more betoken, he grew sorry for id, in the mornin', an' promised me not to touch a scrap of what was in the barn,—ay, long afore the steward an' the peelers came on us,—but was willin' to go among the neighbors an' beg our breakfast, along wid myself, from door to door, sooner than touch it."

"It is my painful duty," resumed the barrister, when Peery would at length cease,—"to ask you for closer information. You saw Michael Carroll in the barn, that night?—"

"*Musha*—The Lord pity him and me!—I did, Sir."

"Doing what?"—

"The sheep between his hands," answered Peery, dropping his head, and speaking almost inaudibly.

"I must still give you pain, I fear;—stand up; take the crier's rod; and if you see Michael Carroll in court, lay it on his head."

"*Och*, *musha*, *musha*, Sir, don't ax me to do that!" pleaded Peery, rising, wringing his hands, and, for the first time, weeping—"och, don't, my lord, don't, and may your own judgment be favourable, the last day!"

"I am sorry to command you to do it, witness; but you must take the rod," answered the judge, bending his head close to his notes, to hide his own tears: and at the same time, many a veteran barrister rested his forehead on the edge of the table. In the body of the court were heard sobs.

"Michaul, *avich!* Michaul, *a corra-machree!*" exclaimed Peery, when at length he took the rod, and faced round to his son,—"is id your father they make to do it, *ma-bauchal?*"

"My father does what is right," answered Michaul, in Irish. The judge immediately asked to have his words translated; and when he learned their import, regarded the prisoner with satisfaction.

"We rest here, my lord," said the counsel, with the air of a man freed from a painful task.

The judge instantly turned to the jury-box.

"Gentlemen of the jury. That the prisoner at the bar stole the sheep in question, there can be no shade of moral doubt. But you have a very peculiar case to consider. A son steals a sheep that his own famishing father and his own famishing son may have food. His aged parent is compelled to give evidence against him here for the act. The old man virtuously tells the whole truth, before you and me. He sacrifices his natural feelings—and we have seen that they are lively—to his honesty, and to his religious sense of the sacred obligations

of an oath. Gentlemen, I will pause to observe, that the old man's conduct is strikingly exemplary, and even noble. It teaches all of us a lesson. Gentlemen, it is not within the province of a judge to censure the rigor of the proceedings which have sent him before us. But I venture to anticipate your pleasure that, notwithstanding all the evidence given, you will be enabled to acquit the old man's son, the prisoner at the bar. I have said there cannot be the shade of a moral doubt that he has stolen the sheep, and I repeat the words. But, gentlemen, there is a legal doubt, to the full benefit of which he is entitled. The sheep has not been identified. The herdsman could not venture to identify it (and it would have been strange if he could) from the dismembered limbs found in the barn. To his mark on its skin, indeed, he might have positively spoken; but no skin has been discovered. Therefore, according to the evidence, and you have sworn to decide by that alone, the prisoner is entitled to your acquittal. Possibly, now that the prosecutor sees the case in its

full bearing he may be pleased with this result."

While the jury, in evident satisfaction, prepared to return their verdict, Mr. Evans, who had but a moment before returned home, entered the court, and becoming aware of the concluding words of the judge, expressed his sorrow aloud, that the prosecution had ever been undertaken; that circumstances had kept him uninformed of it, though it had gone on in his name; and he begged leave to assure his lordship that it would be his future effort to keep Michaul Carroll in his former path of honesty, by finding him honest and ample employment, and, as far as in him lay, to reward the virtue of the old father.

While Peery Carroll was laughing and crying in a breath, in the arms of his delivered son, a subscription, commenced by the bar, was mounting into a considerable sum for his advantage.

THE PUBLICAN'S DREAM.

THE PUBLICAN'S DREAM.

The fair-day had passed over in a little straggling town in the south-east of Ireland, and was succeeded by a languor proportioned to the wild excitement it never failed to create. But of all in the village, its publicans suffered most under the reaction of great bustle. Few of their houses appeared open at broad noon; and some—the envy of their competitors—continued closed even after that late hour. Of these latter, many were of the very humblest kind; little cabins, in fact, skirting the outlets of the village, or standing alone on the road-side, a good distance beyond it.

About two o'clock upon the day in question, a house of "Entertainment for Man and Horse," the very last of the description noticed, to be found between the village and the wild tract of mountain country adjacent to it, was opened by the proprietress, who had that moment arisen from bed.

The cabin consisted of only two apartments, and scarce more than nominally even of two; for the half-plastered wicker and straw partition, which professed to cut off a sleeping nook from the whole area enclosed by the clay walls, was little higher than a tall man, and, moreover, chinky and porous in many places. Let the assumed distinction be here allowed to stand, however, while the reader casts his eyes around what was sometimes called the kitchen, sometimes the tap-room, sometimes the "dancing-flure." Forms which had run by the walls, and planks by way of tables, which had been propped before them, were turned topsy-turvey, and, in some instances, broken. Pewter-pots and pints, battered and bruised, or squeezed together and flattened, and fragments of twisted

glass tumblers, lay beside them. The clay floor was scraped with brogue-nails, and indented with the heel of that primitive foot-gear, in token of the energetic dancing which had lately been performed upon it. In a corner still appeared (capsized, however) an empty eight-gallon beer barrel, recently the piper's throne, whence his bag had blown forth the inspiring storm of jigs and reels, which prompted to more antics than ever did a bag of the laughing-gas. Among the yellow turf-ashes of the hearth lay, on its side, an old blackened tin kettle, without a spout—a principal utensil in brewing scalding water for the manufacture of whiskey-punch; and its soft and yet warm bed was shared by a red cat, who had stolen in from his own orgies, through some cranny, since day-break. The single, four-paned window of the apartment remained veiled by its rough shutter, that turned on leather hinges; but down the wide yawning chimney came sufficient light to reveal the objects here described.

The proprietress opened her back door. She was a woman of about forty; of a robust, large-

boned figure; with broad, rosy visage, dark, handsome eyes, and well-cut nose; but inheriting a mouth so wide, as to proclaim her pure aboriginal Irish pedigree. After a look abroad, to inhale the fresh air, and then a remonstrance (ending in a kick) with the hungry pig, who ran, squeaking and grunting, to demand his long-deferred breakfast, she settled her cap, rubbed down her *prauskeen*, (coarse apron,) tucked and pinned up her skirts behind, and saying, in a loud, commanding voice, as she spoke into the sleeping-chamber—"Get up, now, at once, Jer, I bid you"—vigorously, if not tidily, set about putting her tavern to rights.

During her bustle, the dame would stop an instant, and bend her ear to listen for a stir inside the partition; but at last losing patience, she resumed—

"Why, then, my heavy hatred on you, Jer Mulcahy, is it gone into a *sauvaun* (pleasant drowsiness) you are, over again? or may be you stole out of bed, an' put your hand on one o' them ould, good-for-nothing books, that

makes you the laziest man that a poor woman ever had under one roof wid her? ay, an' that sent you out of our dacent shop an' house, in the heart of the tawn below, an' banished us here, Jer Mulcahy, to sell drams o' whiskey an' pots o' beer to all the riff-raff o' the counthry-side, instead o' the nate boots an' shoes you served your honest time to?"—She entered his, or her chamber, rather, hoping that she might detect him luxuriantly perusing in bed one of the mutilated books, a love of which (or, more truly, a love of indolence, thus manifesting itself) had indeed chiefly caused his downfall in the world: her husband, however, really tired after his unusual bodily efforts of the previous day, only slumbered, as Mrs. Mulcahy had at first anticipated; and when she had shaken and aroused him, for the twentieth time that morning, and scolded him until the spirit-broken blockhead whimpered, nay, wept, or pretended to weep, the dame returned to her household duties.

She did not neglect, however, to keep calling to him, every half-minute, until at last, Mr.

Jeremiah Mulcahy strode into the kitchen; a tall, ill-contrived figure, that had once been well fitted out, but that now wore its old skin, like its old clothes, very loosely; and those old clothes were a discoloured, threadbare, half-polished kerseymere pair of trowsers, and an aged superfine black coat, the last relics of his former Sunday finery: to which had recently and incongruously been added a calf-skin vest, a pair of coarse sky-blue, peasant's stockings, and a pair of brogues. His hanging cheeks and lips told, together, his present bad living and domestic subjection; and an eye that had been blinded by the small-pox, wore neither patch nor band; although in better days, it used to be genteelly hidden from remark—an assumption of consequence now deemed incompatible with his altered condition in society.

"Oh, Cauth! oh, I had such a dhrame," he said, as he made his appearance.

"An' I'll go bail you had," answered Cauth, "an' when do you ever go asleep without having one dhrame or another, that pesters me off o' my legs, the livelong day, 'till the night falls

again to let you have another? Musha Jer, don't be ever an' always such a fool; an' never mind the dhrame now, but lend a hand to help me in the work 'o' the house; see the pewther there; haive it up, man-alive, an' take it out into the garden, an' sit on the big stone, in the sun, an' make it look as well as you can, afther the ill usage it got last night; come, hurry, Jer —go an' do what I bid you."

He retired in silence to "the garden," a little patch of ground luxuriant in potatoes and a few cabbages. Mrs. Mulcahy pursued her work till her own sensations warned her that it was time to prepare her husband's morning or rather day-meal; for by the height of the sun, it should now be many hours past noon. So she put down her pot of potatoes; and, when they were boiled, took out a wooden trencher full of them, and a mug of sour milk, to Jer, determined not to summon him from his useful occupation of restoring the pints and quarts to something of their former shape.

Stepping through the back door, and getting him in view, she stopped short, in silent anger.

His back was turned to her, because to the sun; and while the vessels, huddled about in confusion, seemed little the better of his latent skill and industry, there he sat on his favourite round stone, studiously perusing, half-aloud to himself, some idle volume which, doubtless, he had smuggled out into the garden, in his pocket. Laying down her trencher and her mug, Mrs. Mulcahy stole forward on tiptoe, gained his shoulder without being heard, snatched the imperfect bundle of soiled pages out of his hand, and hurled it into a neighbour's cabbage-bed.

Jeremiah complained, in his usual half-crying tone, declaring that "she never could let him alone, so she couldn't, and he would rather list for a soger, than lade such a life, from year's end to year's end,—so he would."

"Well, an' do then—an' whistle that idle cur off wid you," pointing to a nondescript puppy, which had lain happily coiled up at his master's feet until Mrs. Mulcahy's appearance, but that now watched her closely, his ears half cocked, and his eyes wide open, though his po-

sition remained unaltered. "Go along to the divil, you lazy whelp, you!"—she took up a pint in which a few drops of beer remained since the previous night, and drained it on the puppy's head, who instantly ran off, jumping sideways, and yelping as loud as if some bodily injury had really visited him;—"Yes—an' now you begin to yowl, like your masther, for nothing at all, only because a body axes you to stir your idle legs—hould your tongue, you foolish baste!"—she stooped for a stone—"one would think I scalded you."

"You know you did, once, Cauth, to the backbone; an' small blame for Shuffle to be afeard o' you ever since," said Jer.

This vindication of his own occasional remonstrances as well as of Shuffle's, was founded in truth. When very young, just to keep him from running against her legs, while she was busy over the fire, Mrs. Mulcahy certainly had emptied a ladleful of boiling potatoe-water upon the poor puppy's back; and from that moment it was only necessary to spill a drop of the coldest possible water, or of any cold liquid,

on any part of his body, and he believed he was again dreadfully scalded, and ran out of the house, screaming in all the fancied throes of torture.

"Will you ate your good dinner, now, Jer Mulcahy, an' promise to do something to help me, afther it?—Mother o' Saints!"—thus she interrupted herself, turning towards the place where she had deposited the eulogised food—"see that, you unlucky bird! May I never do an ill turn but there's the pig afther spilling the sweet milk, an' now shovelling the beautiful white-eyes* down her throath, at a mouthful!"

Jer, really afflicted at this scene, promised to work hard, the moment he got his dinner, and his spouse, first procuring a pitch-fork to beat the pig into her sty, prepared a fresh meal for him, and retired to eat her own in the house, and then to continue her labour.

In about an hour, she bethought of paying him another visit of inspection, when Jeremiah's voice reached her ear, calling out in disturbed

* Pieces of potato.

accents—"Cauth!—Cauth! *a-vourneen!* For the love o' heaven, Cauth! where are you?"

Running to him, she found her husband sitting upright, though not upon his round stone, amongst the still untouched heap of pots and pints, his pock-marked face very pale, his single eye staring, his hands clasped and shaking, and moisture on his forehead.

"What!" she cried, "the pewther just as I left it, over again!"

"Oh, Cauth! Cauth! don't mind that now—but spake to me kind, Cauth, an' comfort me."

"Why, what ails you, Jer *a-vourneen?*" affectionately taking his hand, when she saw how really agitated he was.

"Oh, Cauth, oh I had such a dhrame, now, in earnest, at any rate!"

"A dhrame?" she repeated, letting go his hand, "a dhrame, Jer Mulcahy! so, afther your good dinner, you go for to fall asleep, Jer Mulcahy, just to be ready wid a new dhrame for me, instead of the work you came out here to do, five blessed hours ago!"

"Don't scould me, now, Cauth; don't, a-pet:

only listen to me, an' then say what you like. You know the lonesome little glen, between the hills, on the short cut for man or horse, to Kilbroggan?—well, Cauth, there I found myself in the dhrame; and I saw two sailors, tired afther a day's hard walking, sitting before one of the big rocks that stand upright in the wild place; an' they were ating, or dhrinking, I couldn't make out which; an' one was a tall, sthrong, broad-showldhered man,an'the other was sthrong, too, but short an' burly; an' while they were talking very civilly to each other, lo an' behould you, Cauth, I seen the tall man whip his knife into the little man; an'then they both sthruggled, an' wrastled, an' schreeched together, till the rocks rung again; but at last the little man was a corpse; an' may I never see a sight o' glory, Cauth, but all this was afore me as plain as you are, in this garden! an' since the hour I was born, Cauth, I never got such a fright; an'—oh, Cauth! what's that now?"

"What is it, you poor fool, you, but a customer, come at last into the kitchen—an' time for us to see the face o' one this blessed day.

Get up out o' that, wid your dhrames—don't you hear 'em knocking? I'll stay here to put one vessel at laste to rights—for I see I must."

Jeremiah arose, groaning, and entered the cabin through the back door. In a few seconds he hastened to his wife, more terror-stricken than he had left her, and settling his loins against the low garden wall, stared at her.

"Why, then, duoul's in you, Jer Mulcahy—(Saints forgive me for cursing!)—and what's the matter wid you, at-all-at-all?"

"They're in the kitchen," he whispered.

"Well, an' what will they take?"

"I spoke never a word to them, Cauth, nor they to me;—I couldn't—an' I wont, for a duke's ransom: I only saw them stannin' together, in the dark that's coming on, behind the dour, an' I knew them at the first look—the tall one, an' the little one."

With a flout at his dreams, and his cowardice, and his good-for-nothingness, the dame hurried to serve her customers. Jeremiah heard her loud voice addressing them, and their hoarse tones answering. She came out again for two

pints to draw some beer, and commanded him to follow her, and "discoorse the customers." He remained motionless. She returned in a short time, and fairly drove him before her into the house.

He took a seat remote from his guests, with difficulty pronouncing the ordinary words of "God save ye, genteels," which they bluffly and heartily answered. His glances towards them were also few; yet enough to inform him that they conversed together like friends, pledging healths, and shaking hands. The tall sailor abruptly asked him how far it was, by the short cut, to a village where they proposed to pass the night—Kilbroggan?—Jeremiah started on his seat, and his wife, after a glance and a grumble at him was obliged to speak for her husband. They finished their beer; paid for it: put up half a loaf, and a cut of bad watery cheese; saying that they might feel more hungry a few miles on, than they now did; and then they arose to leave the cabin. Jeremiah glanced in great trouble around. His wife had fortunately disappeared; he

snatched up his old hat, and, with more energy than he could himself remember, ran forward to be a short way on the road before them. They soon approached him: and then, obeying a conscientious impulse, Jeremiah saluted the smaller of the two, and requested to speak with him apart. The sailor, in evident surprise, assented. Jer vaguely cautioned him against going any farther that night, as it would be quite dark by the time he should get to the mountain pass, on the bye-road to Kilbroggan. His warning was made light of. He grew more earnest, asserting, what was not the fact, that it was "a bad road," meaning one infested by robbers. Still the bluff tar paid no attention, and was turning away. "Oh, Sir; oh stop, Sir," resumed Jeremiah, taking great courage, "I have a thing to tell you;" and he rehearsed his dream, averring that, in it, he had distinctly seen the present object of his solicitude set upon and slain by his colossal companion. The listener paused a moment: first looking at Jer, and then at the ground, very gravely: but the next moment he burst into a loud, and Jeremiah thought, frightful laugh, and

walked rapidly to overtake his ship-mate. Jeremiah, much oppressed, returned home.

Towards dawn, next morning, the publican awoke in an ominous panic, and aroused his wife to listen to a loud knocking, and a clamour of voices at their door. She insisted there was no such thing, and scolded him for disturbing her sleep. A renewal of the noise, however, convinced even her incredulity, and showed that Jeremiah was right for the first time in his life, at least. Both arose, and hastened to answer the summons.

When they unbarred the front door, a gentleman, surrounded by a crowd of people of the village, stood before it. He had discovered on the bye-road through the hills from Kilbroggan, a dead body, weltering in its gore, and wearing sailor's clothes; had ridden on, in alarm; had raised the village; and some of its population, recollecting to have seen Mrs. Mulcahy's visitors of the previous evening, now brought him to her house to hear what she could say on the subject.

Before she could say anything, her husband

fell senseless at her side, groaning dolefully. While the by-standers raised him, she clapped her hands, and exalted her voice in ejaculations, as Irishwomen, when grieved, or astonished, or vexed, usually do; and now, as proud of Jeremiah's dreaming capabilities, as she had before been impatient of them, rehearsed his vision of the murder, and authenticated the visit of the two sailors to her house, almost while he was in the act of making her the confidant of his prophetic ravings. The auditors stept back in consternation, crossing themselves, smiting their breasts, and crying out, "The Lord save us! The Lord have mercy upon us!"

Jeremiah slowly awoke from his swoon. The gentleman who had discovered the body, commanded his attendance back to the lonesome glen, where it lay. Poor Jeremiah fell on his knees, and, with tears streaming down his cheeks, prayed to be saved from such a trial. His neighbours almost forced him along.

All soon gained the spot; a narrow pass between slanting piles of displaced rocks; the hills from which they had tumbled rising brown

and barren, and to a great height above and beyond them. And there, indeed, upon the stripe of verdure which formed the winding road through the defile, lay the corse of one of the sailors who had visited the publican's house the evening before.

Again Jeremiah dropt on his knees, at some distance from the body, exclaiming, "Lord save us!—yes! oh, yes, neighbours, this is the very place!—only—the saints be good to us, again! —'twas the tall sailor I seen killing the little sailor, and here's the tall sailor murthered by the little sailor!"

"Dhrames go by conthraries, some way or another," observed one of his neighbours; and Jeremiah's puzzle was resolved.

Two steps were now indispensable to be taken: the county coroner should be summoned, and the murderer sought after. The crowd parted to engage in both matters simultaneously. Evening drew on when they again met in the pass; and the first, who had gone for the coroner, returned with him, a distance of near twenty miles; but the second party did not

prove so successful. In fact, they had discovered no clue to the present retreat of the supposed assassin.

The coroner impanelled his jury, and held his inquest under a large, upright rock, bedded in the middle of the pass, such as Jeremiah said he had seen in his dream. A verdict of wilful murder against the absent sailor was quickly agreed upon; but ere it could be recorded, all hesitated, not knowing how to individualize a man of whose name they were ignorant.

The summer night had fallen upon their deliberations, and the moon arose in splendour, shining over the top of one of the high hills that enclosed the pass, so as fully to illumine the bosom of the other. During their pause, a man appeared standing upon the line of the hill thus favoured by the moonlight, and every eye turned in that direction. He ran down the abrupt declivity beneath him: he gained the continued sweep of jumbled rocks which immediately walled in the little valley, springing from one to another of them with such agility and certainty, that it seemed almost magical; and

a general whisper of fear now attested the fact of his being dressed in a straw hat, a short jacket, and loose white trowsers. As he jumped from the last rock upon the sward of the pass, the spectators drew back; but he, not seeming to notice them, walked up to the corpse, which had not yet been touched; took its hand; turned up its face into the moonlight, and attentively regarded the features; let the hand go; pushed his hat upon his forehead; glanced around him; recognised the person in authority; approached, and stood still before him, and said—"Here I am, Tom Mills, that killed long Harry Holmes, and there he lies."

The coroner cried out to secure him, now fearing that the man's sturdiness meant farther harm. "No need," resumed the self-accused;—"here's my bread-and-cheese knife, the only weapon about me;" he threw it on the ground: "I come back just to ax you, commodore, to order me a cruize after poor Harry, bless his precious eyes, wherever he is bound."

"You have been pursued hither?"

"No, bless your heart; but I wouldn't pass

such another watch as the last twenty-four hours, for all the prize-money won at Trafalgar. 'Tisn't in regard of not tasting food or wetting my lips ever since I fell foul of Harry, or of hiding my head, like a cursed animal o' the yearth, and starting if a bird only hopped nigh me; but I cannot go on living on this tack no longer; that's it; and the least I can say to you, Harry, my hearty."

"What caused your quarrel with your comrade?"

"There was no jar or jabber betwixt us, d'you see me."

"Not at the time, I understand you to mean; but surely you must have long owed him a grudge?"

"No, but long loved him; and he, me."

"Then, in heaven's name, what put the dreadful thought in your head?"

"The devil, commodore—(the horned lubber!) and another lubber to help him"—pointing at Jeremiah, who shrank to the skirts of the crowd. "I'll tell you every word of it, commodore, as true as a log-book. For twenty long

and merry years, Harry and I sailed together, and worked together, thro' a hard gale, sometimes, and thro' hot sun, another time; and never a squally word came between us till last night, and then it all came of that there lubberly swipes-seller, I say again. I thought as how it was a real awful thing that a strange landsman, before ever he laid eyes on either of us, should come to have this here dream about us. After falling in with Harry, when the lubber and I parted company, my old mate saw I was cast down, and he told me as much in his own gruff, well-meaning way; upon which I gave him the story, laughing at it. *He* didn't laugh in return, but grew glum—glummer than I ever seed him; and I wondered, and fell to boxing about my thoughts, more and more—(deep sea sink that cursed thinking and thinking, say I!—it sends many an honest fellow out of his course:)—and 'its hard to know the best man's mind,' I thought to myself. Well; we came on the tack into these rocky parts, and Harry says to me all on a sudden, 'Tom, try the soundings, here, a-head, by yourself—or let me, by myself.' I

axed him why? 'No matter,' says Harry, again, 'but after what you chawed about, I don't like your company any farther, till we fall in again at the next village.' 'What, Harry,' I cries, laughing heartier than ever, 'are you afeard of your own mind with Tom Mills?' 'Pho,' he made answer, walking on before me, and I followed him.

"'Yes,' I kept saying to myself, 'he *is* afeard of his own mind with his old ship-mate.' 'Twas a darker night than this, and when I looked a-head, the devil (for now I know 'twas *he* that boarded me!) made me take notice what a good spot it was for Harry to fall foul of me. And then I watched him making way before me, in the dark, and couldn't help thinking he was the better man of the two—a head and shoulders over me, and a match for any two of my inches. And then, again, I brought to mind that Harry would be a heavy purse the better of sending me to Davy's locker, seeing we had both been just paid off, and got a lot of prize-money, to boot;—and, at last—(the real red devil having fairly got me helm a-larboard)—I argufied with

myself that Tom Mills would be as well alive, with Harry Holmes's luck in his pocket, as he could be dead, and *his* in Harry Holmes's; not to say nothing of taking one's own part, just to keep one's self afloat, if so be Harry let his mind run as mine was running.

"All this time Harry never gave me no hail, but kept tacking thro' these cursed rocks; and that, and his last words, made me doubt him more and more. At last he stopped nigh where he now lies, and sitting with his back to that high stone, he calls for my blade to cut the bread and cheese he had got at the village; and while he spoke I believed he looked glummer and glummer, and that he wanted the blade, the only one between us, for a some'at else than to cut bread and cheese; tho' now I don't believe no such thing howsumdever; but then I did; and so, d'you see me, commodore, I lost ballast all of a sudden, and when he stretched out his hand for the blade—(hell's fire blazing up in my lubberly heart!)—'Here it is, Harry,' says I, and I gives it to him in the side!—once, twice, in the right place!"—(the sailor's voice, hitherto calm, though

broken and rugged, now rose into a high, wild cadence)—"and then how we did grapple! and sing out one to another! ahoy! yeho! aye; till I thought the whole crew of devils answered our hail from the hill-tops!—But I hit you again and again, Harry! before you could master me," continued the sailor, returning to the corpse, and once more taking its hand—"until at last you struck,—my old messmate!—And now—nothing remains for Tom Mills—but to man the yard-arm!"

The narrator stood his trial at the ensuing assizes, and was executed for this avowed murder of his shipmate; Jeremiah appearing as a principal witness. Our story may seem drawn either from imagination, or from mere village gossip; its chief facts rest, however, upon the authority of members of the Irish bar, since risen to high professional eminence; and they can even vouch that, at least, Jeremiah asserted the truth of "The Publican's Dream."

THE ACE OF CLUBS.

THE ACE OF CLUBS.

At English fairs, business and merriment are kept rather distinct. The buying and selling of sheep, oxen, and horses, commonly occur before the gingerbread-booths, the toy-booths, and the dancing-booths—(such as the dancing in the latter is found to be)—are visited, and take place upon some spot detached from the crowded encampments of pleasure and finery. At Irish fairs, however, important sales, halfpenny adventures in gambling, love-making, dancing—("the right sort at a fair")—and perhaps some harmless fighting, used, in our time, to go hand in hand from the opening of the blessed day.

Hence, our Irish fair was a less orderly but a more rousing scene than one in this inveterately decorous island. While the mind of a serious spectator is filled with the important circumstance of groups of "strong farmers" bargaining about the transfer of fifty or a hundred great horned beasts, his lively or lighter sensibilities might be appealed to by the oratory of the proprietress of a show of fragile nick-nacks, alarmed lest some of those animals should overthrow and shatter at a touch her whole stock in trade: or a rich-cheeked country girl, laughing loudly, and struggling "just for dacency," half caused by her half-proffered lips, the uncouth smack which startles our observer, and which is the payment for her swain's "treat" to a grass-green ribbon, or a pair of scarlet garters; or the rub-a-dub of a set of "jiggers," with their cries of ecstacy, strikes upon his ear from some adjacent public-house; or perhaps two "factions," who have been at war—as they would themselves say—"ever since their grandfather's time," emit fiercer shouts, as, huddled amongst cattle of all descriptions, and striking the animals as often as

their own heads, they fight their twentieth pitched battle for some cause of dispute which neither can explain.

About forty years ago, when the reader had most to do with such an assemblage, an accompanying feature, now almost worn out by the progress of gentility, was observable. While elderly farmers plodded to the important rendezvous strictly in the spirit of men of business, their sons, or perhaps some youthful landholders of four or five hundred acres, pushed in from the country on nearly whole-blood horses, arrayed in the Sunday suit, which, at each weekly mass, made them the stars of their district chapels, purely or chiefly to ride up and down through throngs of men, women, and beasts, vouching their attractions in the face of half the assembled county, and also in the faces of rural "darkers" of the other sex, who, perched on pillions behind their fathers, and flaming in all colours, came pretty nearly in the same policy, to the great general mart for the day.

A group of such gallant amateurs, standing still because they have been blocked up by sur-

rounding droves of cattle, is presented to the reader, at the fair, holden about forty years ago, to which we direct our attention. The young men were all known to each other; and they talked or laughed cheerily, and seemed fully enjoying their day's adventures.

"But stop, boys," said one, "here comes Martin Brophy, and if he sees us so merry he'll swear we're laughing at himself."

"And then put a quarrel on us all," said another.

"Then ye won't spake to him, boys?" asked a third.

"What's the use, Jack? Ever since things went so conthrary against him, you can't look but he thinks it a slight, so that there's no managing with Martin; and I, for one, will just let him go quietly by on his poor broken-doon half-blood."

"Besides, Tom, though an auld head can't be put on young shoulders, (a truth we all stand up for,) Martin *done the vengeance** entirely, in regard of his behaviour to little Calty Morissy."

* Went too far.

"Yes, and the priest *caeling him** for it, at last mass, Sunday-se'nnit (week,)" added a pious person of the party; "but here he is! See, boys!" speaking loudly, and pointing his whip to a drove of cows and oxen, while the eyes of his companions followed his—"them browns is the clanest cattle in the fair to my mind."

Martin Brophy passed them with eyes studiously averted in the opposite direction, as if he had determined to anticipate their slight; and yet his erect carriage, his knitted brow, and his protruded lips, destroyed the ease which should have given to the act its best expression, and suggested, instead, a bitter and haughty consciousness of the presence of his former companions in the carouse and in the sporting-field.

They continued their observations by turns.

"There he goes, the proudest and the poorest grandee in Leinster."

"Look at the hat!—the poor hair will be growing through it with the next crop."

"But the auld green!"—(Martin's coat)—"*it* aught to bring him new ones by that time,

* Rebuking him.

for it's long ago it ran to seed between his shoulders."

"And what brings him to the fair, boys?"

"To sell auld Nora:" (Martin's skeleton steed.)

"Yes—to the tanners."

"Or to cut a dash on her back-bone."

"Aye—before Dora Marum; only she's not here; I stopt at the house to-day morning, to know if she'd be at the fair with auld cranky Dan, the father of her; but, no, purty Dora couldn't come."

"Then Martin won't take the light out of her eyes entirely this blessed day."

"Hoot, tut, man-a-live; in jest or arnest, that's all gone by; Dan gave him the cauld shawldher long ago."

They separated to resume the exhibition of their handsome steeds and admirable persons through the fair. We follow the individual of whom they have been speaking.

He was a man as young as any of them; better featured than any, notwithstanding that premature sufferings and the conflict of strong

passions had thinned and swarthed his cheek; nay, his air, and the character of those features, gave him nearer claims than any to a gentlemanlike appearance, although, as they had truly remarked, his attire was shabby.

He had not overheard a word of the jeers spoken at his expense, but his sensitive mind imagined such a dialogue between his former friends, and imagined it to an extent even beyond the reality; and the petty ferment consequently called up in his bosom, worked his features and temper more violently than greater misfortunes had that day done.

They scoffingly wondered why he appeared at the fair. Martin Brophy could not, himself, have satisfied their idle and cruel curiosity. He could only have stated, were he so inclined, that upon the approach of bailiffs to his house, early in the morning, to seize his furniture—the last of his earthly goods—he had run to the stable, saddled old Nora, jumped on her back, and while his mother's low wailings filled his ears, pushed the feeble beast out of sight and hearing of a scene which maddened his heart, but which

he could not help; and that then, waywardly yielding to an unaccountable impulse, he had hurried into the thick of another scene, the most unlikely of any he might select, to assuage his angry feelings.

"And this," he muttered, "this is the end of slashing Mick Brophy's divil-may-care days; of his hunting days, and his dancing days, and his cock-fighting days: ay, and of his good-fellow nights, with their songs, and their brave cursing and swearing, and screeling and tattering. O father! you left us too soon for Mick's good. Luck out of your grave and see him now. Not worth a lady halfpenny stock-lock and barrel; not a dacent tack to his back; the auld mother crying at home to the bare walls in the empty house; Dora Marum lost; and these very *kouts** that you left me a head-and-shoulders over—and that I made my equals only to let them make me what I am at last come to—these very scheming, cringing, *palavering*† hounds ——Oh!"—yielding to the bitterness of his immediate position—"by the light o' the world!

* Paltry fellows. † Sycophantic.

I'd a'most stop thinking of every thing else that once pleasured me, only for as much good fortune as would again put me where I was—above them; and then, with my foot on their necks, instead of the hand to their hands, as it used to be!"

His reverie was interrupted by the quick approach of two bodies of screaming rioters. As they capered past him, he drew, even from their noise and outrage, a renewed cause for embittered regret. "Ay! Dullard's faction and Campion's faction!" repeating their war-cries and now soliloquizing rather aloud—"But who shouts Brophy's faction to-day? though I remember the day when if any tenant or follower of his shouted that name, a hundred good *alpeens* would jump at the sound." "An' there's one, at laste, to shout it yet, Masther Martin," said a low, thick-necked, red-headed lad at his side—"whoo!" jumping among a pacific crowd—"whoo for Masther Brophy? who'll look crooked at him? will you? or you?"

Martin was much surprised at this unrecognized friend so Quixotically challenging the

whole world on his account; but as the hero, after prancing here and there, and peering up hostility into many faces, only earned for his stunted, burley, unwarlike figure, and for the cause it abetted, contemptuous sneers or loud laughter, on the part of the athletic fellows around him, poor Brophy's wonder changed into increased mortification.

A little old man, dressed in the common peasant garb of the district; namely, coat, vest, breeches and hose, all grey, with a two-buckled flaxen wig, and a foxy felt hat, staggered up the street, holding a stick, and every now and then stopping and trying to balance himself in order to make a solemn drunken soliloquy; and upon these occasions he feebly flourished his stick, and seemed to come to the conclusion that he was aggrieved and valiant.

"Or you!" continued Martin's knight, as the old fellow met his eye—"mind this, Masther Martin"—speaking under his breath, while he passed Brophy—"a friendlier blow was never struck for your good"—and darting on, down tumbled the man of soliloquies, and with a dozen pur-

suers at his heels, Martin one of them; away scampered the aggressor. For notwithstanding the lad's whisper, Martin could not think that the little old man had anything to do with him, nor with his assaulter. There was in the blow a matter-of-fact kind of character; its very sound on the other's skull, might suggest an act without a motive, an effect without a cause.

None of the indignant pursuers succeeded in apprehending the red-haired champion; and Martin returned to condole with the inconsiderable victim, sacrificed so much against his will, to his feudal importance.

The sire had arisen and gone on. Partly by inquiries, partly by a gory and devious tract, Martin traced him out of the fair, and then out of the town. Spurring his sorry nag, he overtook him upon the road towards his own sad home. The sufferer still staggered, but now more from weakness than inebriety.

"Tell me that young rascal's name, daddy."

"Throth, an' I don't know the poor boy's name."

"Come back into the town, then; he will

surely be caught, and you must be ready to take the law of him."

"Why then," in a very kind and simple tone, "I believe we can't do that, either, *avich*;" (my son;) "I owe the poor boy no ill-will, an' sure I won't go for to put him in raal throuble, jest for a little matther of a *clipe*," (blow,) "of a stick, that I'm sure, afore my Maker, there was no harum in; an' I'll engage he's a good, honest, poor slob for all that."

"Then let me help you a bit of the road, daddy:" Martin alighted, and throwing Nora's bridle over one arm, caused his tottering companion to lean on the other.

After walking along slowly for some time—"The blessins be in your path for ever, avich: sure here's my poor cabin," said the old man, stopping at the closed door of a very inferior habitation even of the kind he named.

"This?" questioned Martin Brophy—"why, this, I remember, used to be Musha Merry's—and stop"—looking attentively into his face—"Yes—now I remember you too—you *are* ould Musha Merry, our great fairy-man."

"Hushth, hushth—a-pet—manners to *them*—manin' you no offence, but the best o' good, conthrary-wise: poor Musha Merry I am—*their* friend, an' the friend o' the good Christhms, whenever *they* let me."

"Oho!" ejaculated Martin, assuming a sneer, but from the effects of his early education, not fully feeling it however—"and didn't you send a body to me, the other day, to tell me not to let the heart be cast down entirely, for all that's come and gone, yet?"

"Of a thruth, an' so I did, avich; just out o' the pity is on my soul for your only throubles, an' the kind-of-a-sort-of a knowledge I have that there's loock in store for you, let the priest scauld you an' curse you, off o' the althar, as often as he likes, plaise his reverence."

"With help from the fairies?" laughed Martin.

"O, hushth, now again, *avich*, an' call them no names, but lave them to themse'fs, my honey, Masther Martin; an' no, in throth no; but wid help from them, sure they haven't the power to

give the riches, like others, much as they can do in every thing else."

"Then with help from the Barrymount gang?"

"Avoch, nien, nien, entirely; duv you think, Masther Martin Brophy, my pet, I'd go for to give you the adwice to take part wid them rappanees o' the arth—Nien, nien;—and yet,"—speaking more expressively—"there's a way, so there is—but hushth, again!" the door of his cabin opened, and a group of men and women appeared at it, scraping their feet or dropping curtsies to him. "See, here's some o' the poor neighbours waitin' for me to give 'em the good o' the trifle o' knowledge that's come to me, somehow or someway—a good day to ye, neighbours, honies; come in, Masther Martin, avich, an' just tie your bridle to the hasp, and rest yourself on the chair a bit, and when I do my endayvours for the poor Christhms, sure then you an' I can go on wid our own little *shanachus*—(gossiping.)"

Doing as he was exhorted, Martin Brophy

followed Musha Merry into his cabin. More people than had appeared at the door were tarrying for him under its roof, the greater number women, who sat on the mud floor, with their back to the mud wall. Martin was aware that, as patients crowd the waiting-rooms of a popular town or city physician, these persons had come to get charms from Musha Merry, for evils inflicted upon themselves, or upon their families, or upon their cows, horses, or crops.

Occupying "the chair," so described, because it was the only one in the house, Martin looked on attentively, and with more deference towards the wise man's gifts, than his language might have expressed at the door: for unconsciously he agreed in the general homage now paid, in his presence, to the wizard-doctor, if, indeed, he had ever really felt disposed to withhold his share of it.

Musha Merry first retired behind a wicker partition, or screen, which ran half way across the waste apartment, at its upper end, expressing modestly an intention to charm away his own broken head, before he engaged in the

service of any other afflicted person: and after having been invisible for a short time, he re-appeared, every previous mark of violence effaced from his cheek and temple, or hidden under a more ample wig, while his crabbed old features simpered all over with their usual insinuating good-nature, and his glossy grey eyes were almost shut up in the pucker of wrinkles, which the bland expression induced round them.

A pale, melancholy, over-watched woman, arose, curtsying, and calling him "sir," and stated the first case that claimed his professional attention. "The good people" had sent a great "faver" (fever) to her only son, and the doctor gave the boy up, and the priest gave him up, and what was she to do?—Musha Merry made very light of the matter, and of the skill of his learned brethren, the doctor and the priest, and speaking smooth words of comfort and assurance, gave her a phial filled with some coloured liquid, murmured at her ear directions for administering it, received his fee, and the sorrowful woman slipt lightly over the threshold.

A half-starved catlier next represented, in a whining miserable voice, how his one cow had been "overlooked." The fairy-man handed him a little bag to tie under her left ham, and smilingly pocketed sixpence more.

A second woful mother, holding an emaciated, silent, starving infant upon her arms, rose from her squatting position at the wall, and her words were — "Avoch, Misther Musha Merry, sir, sure this poor crature of a baby isn't wid me at all, but gone off wid *them*"—meaning, and plainly understood to mean, notwithstanding the seeming puzzle of two identities, that the child which, a few months before, she had brought into the world, had been kidnapped by the fairies, and the certainly preternatural looking babe she held out for inspection, left in its stead.

Another poor peasant applied to have "the fairy-worum pult out of his tooth, because it wouldn't let him sleep night or day, wid the atin' it war givin' him;" and Musha Merry procured a cow's horn, burnt a reed in it, put the pointed end into the patient's gaping mouth,

whispered at the other end, then shook it over the palm of his hand till a little red worm fell out; and the man departed with a happy grin on his features, declaring that his tooth-ache was perfectly cured.

Many more curious complaints received fit attention from the fairy-doctor. At length Martin Brophy and he were left alone. Then old Musha Merry bolted the crazy door of his desolate cabin, and rubbing his hands softly, and simpering in his most affectionate style, approached the young man, and seated himself upon a large stone at his feet.

"And so this is *not* the way I'm to win the good luck that is in store for me," said Martin.

The wizard slightly glancing towards the upper end of the cabin, softly said, "It is not."

"And yet there *is* a way you tell me," resumed Martin Brophy, after a break in the conversation, during which his companion kept his eyes fixed on the floor, now very serious.

"There *is*," slowly answered Musha Merry: and he did not offer to go on, nor yet raise his

head. Deep silence ensued, except that Martin could distinctly hear every wheezing respiration of the old man at his feet. The pause and his situation began to grow disagreeable to Martin Brophy, he could not tell why. As his eye glanced round, a washy gleam of December sunshine which, entering through a small aperture in the broken thatch roof, crept over the rough floor, as unaccountably made him almost start. In fact, the young farmer *was* superstitious, and the dreary and peculiar lonesomeness and silence of the fairy-man's abode, together with the mysterious hint as to "the way" in which he was to retrieve his fortune, and the suspended explanation of that hint, fully called up this weak sentiment.

Still Musha Merry did not go on, and Martin resumed in a low voice: "Well; and what *is* that way?"

His counsellor now looked up into his face, every feature at rest, and his shadowy grey eyes widely opened;—the change of expression was, indeed, so remarkable, that Martin Brophy returned, in a kind of fascination, the glossy and

vague glare with which he found himself regarded.

"You 're afeard o' the priest, so you are, tho' he done his best on you already, or I'd tell you," said Musha Merry.

"Curse the priest!" cried Martin Brophy, in a mixed feeling of impatience at the wizard's hesitation, and anger at, as he believed, the unmerited disgrace which his clergyman had stamped on him.

"That 'll do for a beginnin'," muttered the old man; "an' now I'll *show* you the way, afore I tell it to you;" he arose from the stone; "you haven't much o' the goold or the silver in your pockets, Masther Martin, avich?"

"Not a cross to keep the devil out o 'them—and my mother is at home without her dinner."

"Ochone!—an' sure that's a hard case—but a friend is near at hand, Masther Martin; never mind me, for a start now, only observe this."—

He drew a dingy card from his bosom, and, holding it out for his companion's inspection, Martin saw that it was the Ace of Clubs: and then Musha Merry hobbled to the upper end

of the waste apartment, and hid himself behind the wicker partition.

"I'm kneelin' down, a *vich-ma-chree*," (son of my heart,) he said from his concealment. Martin's bosom beat quick. In short time the old man's voice sounded again.

"An' now it's time for you to put your hand in your hat that's close by your side."

Martin did so, and his moving fingers caused to jingle in the hat some pieces of coin. He snatched it up, looked into it, and saw three guineas. His bosom's quick throbbing was arrested by a spasm, and as Musha Merry again advanced, smiling in a congratulating and affectionate manner, he saw that his young friend was deadly pale.

"You knelt down, you say, to send me these?" questioned Martin Brophy

"Throth, aye, on the two poor knees, avich."

"Did you pray?"

"Och, an' sure I did, from the bottom o' my heart."

"Tell me ——" Martin slowly stood up, and

glanced stealthily round the cabin as he whispered—"Tell me—did you pray—to God?"

Musha Merry bent his head close to Martin Brophy's face, and also answered in a whisper —"No."

Martin sprang to the door, and began hastily to unbolt it, having put up, however, almost unconsciously, the three guineas.

"An' you won't wait to larn *the way*, yoursef?" asked the old man, as he crossed the unhallowed threshold.

Martin muttered an incoherent dissent.

"Well, avich; when it's most pleasin' to you, to get the hapes o' goold, instead o' them three beggarly guineas, sure you know who to come to, to larn you;—or, if you like, I'll be in the little glin o' Coile at the fint light, to-morrow mornin'—it's a good place for talkin' of id."

Without uttering a word, Martin mounted old Nora, and rode off.

"Come out here to me, now, Maurice, you poor creature," continued Musna Merry, again carefully bolting his cabin door.

A man about forty strode from behind the

wicker screen. Before he appeared, there had been a rustling, as if of straw; and from his rubbing his eyes, and also from the fact of bits of straws being stuck through his tangled black hair, and to different parts of his attire, it would seem that this concealed inmate of the cabin was asleep, or dozing, previous to Musha Merry's call. His person and limbs were athletic and coarse, his brow scowling; and he held a large pistol in his hand.

"By dad, Maurice, my poor boy, I b'lieve we are nigh hand to our snug little revenge on the Brophys at last, though it cost the simple auld father o' you a'most thirty long years to bring it about," resumed Musha Merry, rubbing his hands, and smiling on his son.

"Will he 'list wid us, father?" growled Maurice.

"I didn't ax him, and I won't ax him a-while, yet, avich; because, for all his throubles an' ru'nation, the good bringin'-up he got from his mother, does be comin' into his head, an' the priest-talk, an' the masses, an' them things; an' if we bid him be a bould Barrymount-boy, at once, 'twauld

frighten him, may be, an' he'd dhraw back from us entirely, not to talk o' the chance o' tellin' the neighbours some of our sacrets."

"Then I don't know what you spake of."

"Wait, avich. Sure I made him b'lieve that the Ace o' Clubs, wid help from the card's masther, sent him three guineas aut o' the brave booty that came to your share last night; an' I'm a big fool in my ould days, Maurice, if he rests night or day till he spakes to the card himsel'; an' as soon as he does, tho' he'll be as far from the hapes o' goold as ever he was, little o' that, *rhaumaush*, (nonsense,) about the priests, and the prayers, and the mass-songs, 'ill stay wid Martin Brophy: and then we'll have our own time to list him, Maurice, avich, jist by promisin' the riches in another vay."

"The priest was lookin' for him to-day mornin', father; an' if he comes across him now, he'll take Martin out o' your hands."

"We'll do our endayvour to keep the' both broken friends, Maurice; Nance Dempsy must throw hersef in the poor boy's way to-night; an' afore daylight, the priest 'ill be tauld where to

find them together; Nance is a duck-o'-the world, in regard of a decoy-duck."

Meantime, Martin Brophy rode homeward. The winter evening fell rapidly. He came in sight of the front of his house; no usual lights glimmered through its windows. He turned into the back-yard, put up Nora, groomed her carefully, gave her a bunch of musty hay, crossed to the kitchen-door, raised the latch, and heard the low lament of his mother before he saw her, seated on a low stool at the hearth, and confronted by a very old woman, her nurse; the embers of some twigs, gathered by the latter from the neighbouring hedges, flickering between them.

With a shrill scream, his only living parent sprang up to throw herself round his neck: she had entertained fearful thoughts as to the cause of his absence.

"Come into the little parlour, Martin, my son," she said; then changing her voice, "Avoch! an' sure I forgot. I left it myself to sit down here, on this stool, borrowed at a neighbour's cabin, becase it broke my heart

to look at the four bare walls, that often saw us and ours comfortable and happy between 'em. An' I'm afeared you're dhry and hungry, Martin, my son."

"Cush," said Martin, throwing a guinea to the old woman—"hurry down to the village, and get us something to ate and to dhrink."

The feeble creature, with cries of wonder and joy, tottered off on her errand. His mother, also surprised, inquired how he had procured the guinea. He hesitated. She looked alarmed, and hoped he had not——— And she stopt, and with streaming eyes gazed on him.

"Mother, mother," he said hastily, "don't be afeard—I neither killed nor robbed for it."

Cush returned with food and spirits. She had also providently thought of the fire, and a pile of turf now blazed on the hearth. Martin and his mother ate their meal off their knees; the bailiffs had not left them a table. It was scarce over when horsemen rode up

to the front of the house, hallooing heartily. The old nurse went to the hall-door to "discoorse them;" Martin stept after her to listen. He soon ascertained that the visitors were two of the "squireens," who had insulted him that day at the fair; and who now, elated with liquor, turned off the main road to taunt him farther, by asking a bed at his desolate house. When, in consequence of Cush's representations, that there was "no one in id," they galloped off, still hallooing, "I'll match ye yet," said Martin, grinding his teeth, "if I burned for it."

"Mother," he resumed abruptly, in some time after, while he liberally helped himself to the whiskey, "tell me some o' your choice old stories about ghosts, and fairies, and Ould Nick."

"Christ save us, Martin Brophy," crossing herself.

"Yes, mother; you know you had plenty of 'em for me when I didn't ask for 'em—and never mind the night it is—the blacker to us, the more we want something to put it out of our heads"—he drank another deep draught—

Come, mother, I remember a capital story of yours that I'll thank you to tell me once again—about old Squire Jarvis, and a friend of his."

After many demurs, the mother began her tale. It was an old one; or rather a local version of one, common to every country in Christendom. Squire Jarvis was a very bad man, and led a very wicked life, and became very poor in his old age. Every body forsook him, and he lived in a lone house, a great way off the road, where he did nothing from morning to night but eat and drink, and sleep, and commit sin, and scold the few servants who remained to share his fortune. One Sunday evening, after dinner, and after a good deal of wine too, he got into such a passion with his own man, and so abused and swore at him, that the domestic declared he would quit his service as soon as he paid him his wages. Now Squire Jarvis could pay him no wages at all, and this made him downright furious; he turned the man out of the room, and fell asleep in his arm-chair by the fire, still cursing and

swearing, and just as he said—"I'd sell myself, body and sawl, for one barrel-bag-ful of goold."

About twelve o'clock he awoke, when everything was still in the house, and looking across the fire, there was a dark-complexioned gentleman, decently dressed in black, sitting in the chair opposite to his, and attentively watching him—but the tale need not be continued: Squire Jarvis got the "barrel-bag-ful of goold" on the usual terms.

"And sure you're not such a fool, mother, as to b'lieve such a thing can happen?" demanded Martin Brophy.

His mother, mingling pious and frightened ejaculations with her answer, had no doubt but it could. Nor had Martin himself much doubt when he asked the question. He only wanted confirmation from his mother's anticipated assurances; for he misconceived the mode by which Musha Merry proposed to endow him with wealth.

The distressed parent, wearied with grief and watching, began to nod. Martin arose to make up some kind of a couch for her. Cush,

again provident, had ordered straw; upon part of it, in the corner of the kitchen, next to the fire, he left his mother and her old nurse to stretch themselves; the rest he took into his own chamber. And here he flung it from him, locked himself in, and holding his rushlight in his hand, stared wildly and fiercely around.

"Would he, without Musha Merry's knowledge, make *the call?*" At the home thought, his forehead grew moist and cold, his scalp froze, his limbs shook. A glance at his desperate position, aided by the effects of the spirits, controlled his horror. "He would!"—and, as the preface to his call, he furiously, though unconsciously, stamped upon the floor. The whole house vibrated to the shock, and something slightly clattered against the wall of the chamber. He looked up. It was an old wooden crucifix hanging by a thread from a nail—the only article which the bailiffs had hesitated to drag away. He rivetted his eye upon the symbol of his redemption and his hope; he trembled again, but it was with new fears; he dashed down his rushlight—trod on it—plunged

on his knees into his straw; and amid choking sobs, Martin Brophy half muttered a prayer—but it was a prayer to God.

In about an hour, a wailing, soft voice sounded from under his window. He arose; looked out, and saw a girl sitting on the ground, and rocking to and fro, and clapping her hands. He opened the window and spoke to her. She said she had missed her father and her brothers at the fair; had strayed so far in quest of them; and now did not know what to do for the night; but the public-houses were open in the village, only she had no money. Martin went out to her through the window, and accompanied her to the village. The least respectable of the public-houses gave them entertainment and lodging for payment before-hand. Martin, but too well acquainted from former experience with the ways of the house, spent his second guinea before he fell asleep, and ere he awoke in the morning, Nance Dempsy had gone off with the other.

With remorse for recent sin, added to his frenzy of the previous night, he hurried out of

the house. It was yet scarce day-break, though not an early hour. As he issued from the door, a horseman, standing still, confronted him, as if watching the egress of some person. At a glance he knew his rigid parish-priest.

"And I find you coming out from this house, after all, Martin Brophy?" he said; "you have been warned from the altar; take heed you do not expose yourself to be cursed from the altar."

"Curse away!" answered Martin, bounding across the road into the fields, the worst species of desperation now blackening in his bosom, namely, that of lost character and conscious guilt.

Without thinking of an interview with Musha Merry, he gained the little glen of Coile, where, in happier and better days, Dora Marum and he had often sat together. In summer it was a beautiful close scene; a fairy dell, blocked up at one end, by a face of shrubbed rock, adown which trickled a silver line of water, and almost embowered at either side by beach and ash trees, that dropped their foliage to the very surface of

the mossy sod under foot. Now, upon a howling winter's morning, and while twilight yet brooded over it, the place bore, on the contrary, a drear and fierce character. The thread of shining water had become a red and foamy torrent, which tore through the middle of the little valley; the naked trees groaned and clattered their tangled branches in the gust, chorusing its sullen roar; and the piping of the wind among them sometimes filled Martin's ear like human or superhuman voices. Immediately under the fall of water, there was a deep and boiling basin, and self-destruction, by a plunge into this, was now Martin's impulse. Despairing, and even depraved as his heart had become, he rejected, since his change of feeling the previous night, prolonged and successful life by virtue of a cold-blooded covenant with the enemy of man. He glanced around to note if he was alone. A figure was just disappearing out of the dell—he thought his champion at the fair; and now he identified his red-haired friend with Keeraun Dernphy, Dora's foster-brother. Another figure, that of a female, stood watching

him. He ran towards her; it was Dora Marum —he fell with a cry at her feet.

Dora called on him to "Stand up like a man!"

"You do not care for me now, Dora: and for that reason, little do I care for myself."

"Stand up, Martin Brophy!"—the tall, finely-formed, brown-complexioned girl spoke with energy, and her brown cheek reddened, and her black eye grew expressive. "I do care for you, yet; though, indeed, you care so little for yourself; and though you have given me no cause to tell you so." He arose. "Stand up, in arnest, Martin; — mind your life, and your fortune must mend with it, and then my father will no longer hinder me from showing *how much* I care for you."

"And not till then, Dora? not till I grow rich?" cried Martin, in total despair of his chance of succeeding according to this advice.

"No, Martin Brophy, not till then," answered old Daniel Marum, gaining his daughter's side. "Come home, Dora; it's plain language I spake to you, Martin, my boy; grow as rich as will

make you Dora's match, and then take her, with my blessin';" he and Dora went away.

"Grow rich! haw! shouted Martin, furiously. Old Musha Merry tottered before him, and repeated his offer to "larn him the way haw." Martin angrily desired him to begone, adding, that "the horned duoul might have him, body and soul—and should, soon—but not at a price." His counsellor smilingly assured him that he greatly mistook; that no such hard terms were expected as the bribe for hastening superabundance of riches. Martin eagerly pressed him to explain. He did so; and although there certainly was a material difference in the bargain proposed from that entered into by old Squire Jarvis, still Martin Brophy listened in unfeigned horror.

"An' see, here it's for you," added Musha Merry, handing his begrimed card—"the auld one that stood your friend afore,—so you'll have loock vid it, *avich*." Martin took the card, and slowly and silently walked out of the little dell.

"There, now," muttered Musha Merry to himself, as he laboriously crawled up the side

of the retreat, in a different direction. "An' only use id as I bid you, Martin Brophy, my boy, an' if we don't list you in the bauld Barrymount throop, *naubocklish*; (never mind;) an' in a little while afther that, plaise God, you'll be snug in the stone-jug (gaol) in their fine taun beyunt, an' in a fair way to go under the skibbeah's (Jack Ketch's) hands, in regard of bein' found aut, somehow, for one o' them terrible robbers that frightens the whole caunthry. Ay, just the way it happened to poor Mechaul, the one brother o' me, about thirty years agone, by manes of a father you had, rest his sowl, the first time our brave boys took head together, and opened the fun wid a call at Dick Brophy's house, afther sun-set; and maybe it's not a nate fit for *that* to help your father's son to jest the same loock your father helped poor Mechaul to; ah, an' jest on the same ould account; ha, bud stop, isn't that Keeraun Dernphy's red head watchin' me agin?"

It was Sunday morning. Half an hour after Martin Brophy left the glen, he was seen hovering about the door of the little country chapel,

by the crowds who went in to early mass. They wondered that they did not see him at the entrance to the galleries, whither, consistently with his former rank, it had been his habit to repair. Indeed, they also wondered at his appearance near the house of prayer, under any circumstances, for lately he had been absent from all religious observances. But they concluded that he came to humble himself to the "call" of his priest, issued the previous Sunday. Arrived in "the body of the chapel," where the crowds knelt or stood without seats of any kind, many looked round for Martin, but none saw him.

He was in the chapel, notwithstanding. Avoiding and baffling observation, he had stolen through the throng to a spot under the rude pulpit, where inside the sweep of its stairs, was a small space, left comparatively unthronged, and where, without his knowledge of the fact, women who proposed to communicate after the ceremony of the morning, were in the habit of kneeling, with their faces enveloped in the hoods of their dark-blue cloaks, and turned to

the wall, so that they might compose themselves to approach the railings of the sanctuary. And here also, turning his face to the wall, Martin *knelt* to prepare his mind, and wait his time for HIS devotional act.

At a certain period of the mass, the priest elevates the consecrated bread and wine, which Roman Catholics believe to be the Real Presence; and Martin Brophy, acting upon Musha Merry's instructions, intended, when this usual ceremonial should occur, to turn his back on the altar, hold up before his eyes, in the hollow of his hand, the Ace of Clubs which his tutor had given him, and bow to it thrice, and worship it thrice, "in the devil's name:" the only concession, he was assured, required by the great father of riches to give him power over mountains of gold.

In a paroxysm of desperation he had so far taken his measures. But after he had knelt down, and that mass had begun, the sullen lethargy of Martin's heart became fearfully broken up. The act of apostacy he resolved to commit was, in its form, of no ordinary character;

and, further, Martin Brophy believed in the Redeemer, of whose atonement for the sins of the world the sacrament was a memento; nay, still according to his creed, a perpetuation. And this Redeemer, and this sacrament, he came to forswear on his knees, for the worship of the king of hell;—the thought swelled his bosom with tremendous horror.

The pious women and girls around him murmured their aspirations of repentance for their sins, and of joy at the prospect of partaking of that very sacrament. His heart chilled and collapsed over its own hidden intent. Still he dragged the intent closer to him, and did not waver. Mass went on—every stage of its progress familiar to his ear—every response of the surpliced boys who served at the steps of the altar—he had often served there himself—and a vivid picture started before his mind, of his mother folding up his newly-washed surplice, and giving it him to button under his boyish jacket, that he might hasten off to attend his favourite priest at early prayers. The time drew near when the bread and wine were to be con-

secrated. Martin shuffling on his knees, fully turned his back upon the altar, and, shaking in every limb, and teeming with cold moisture, adjusted the card in the palm of his hand. The little bell, rung by one of the boys, which gave notice of the approach of "the Elevation," tingled in his ears, and pierced into his brain. The hosannah hymn burst from the village choir, and echoed over him and around him, first loudly and shrilly, and then louder and confused, then wildly and faintly, until, as almost madness mastered him, its swell seemed to break out into scream and laughter. Again, however, he was darkly aware of the second notice of the little bell, and then with staring eyes and ghastly features, he raised the card close to his face. His arm was dragged down. He uttered a loud cry, and gazed under the head of the woman's cloak who had thus interfered between him and his terrible apostacy. The eyes of Dora Marum met his. She had learned of his dread purpose from Keraun Dernphy, who contrived to listen to Martin's conversation with Musha

Merry in the glen, and who, indeed, had been long aware of the old robber's thirst for revenge against her unfortunate lover.

After his scream, Martin fell senseless, though in strong convulsions. For weeks afterwards he was a raving madman. When his senses returned to him, he found himself in the priest's house, watched by his mother and Dora Marum; they were softly whispering over his bed. Martin Brophy did not leave that house till, in an humbled, contrite, and chastened spirit, he had worthily propitiated Heaven's forgiveness, through the medium of the sacrament he had so recently proposed, along with that Heaven, to forswear. Restored to health in mind, in heart, and in body, he seriously set himself to follow the advice given to him by Dora in the Glen of Coile; and from very small beginnings, with perhaps some compassionate allowances for his griefs and sufferings, became, in a few years, "a match," in old Dan Marum's eye, for his only daughter, just about the time that Musha Merry left this world to seek his

unavenged brother in a better or a worse, and by the same mode of exit vouchsafed to that worthy brother.

THE END.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY IBOTSON AND PALMER, SAVOY STREET.